

# Mexican Life

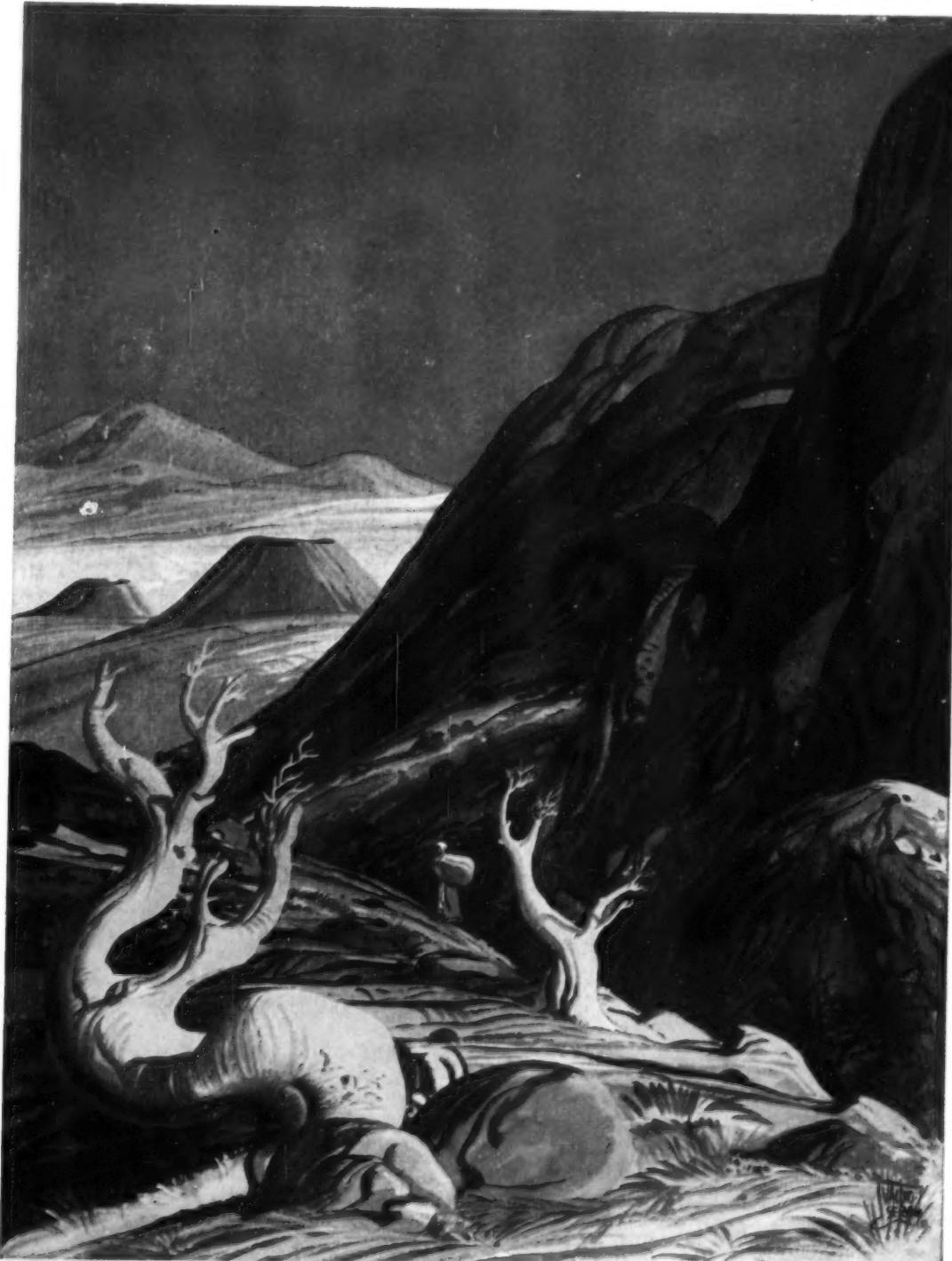
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No. 2, Vol. XXX



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## Mexican Life

*Mexico's Monthly Review*

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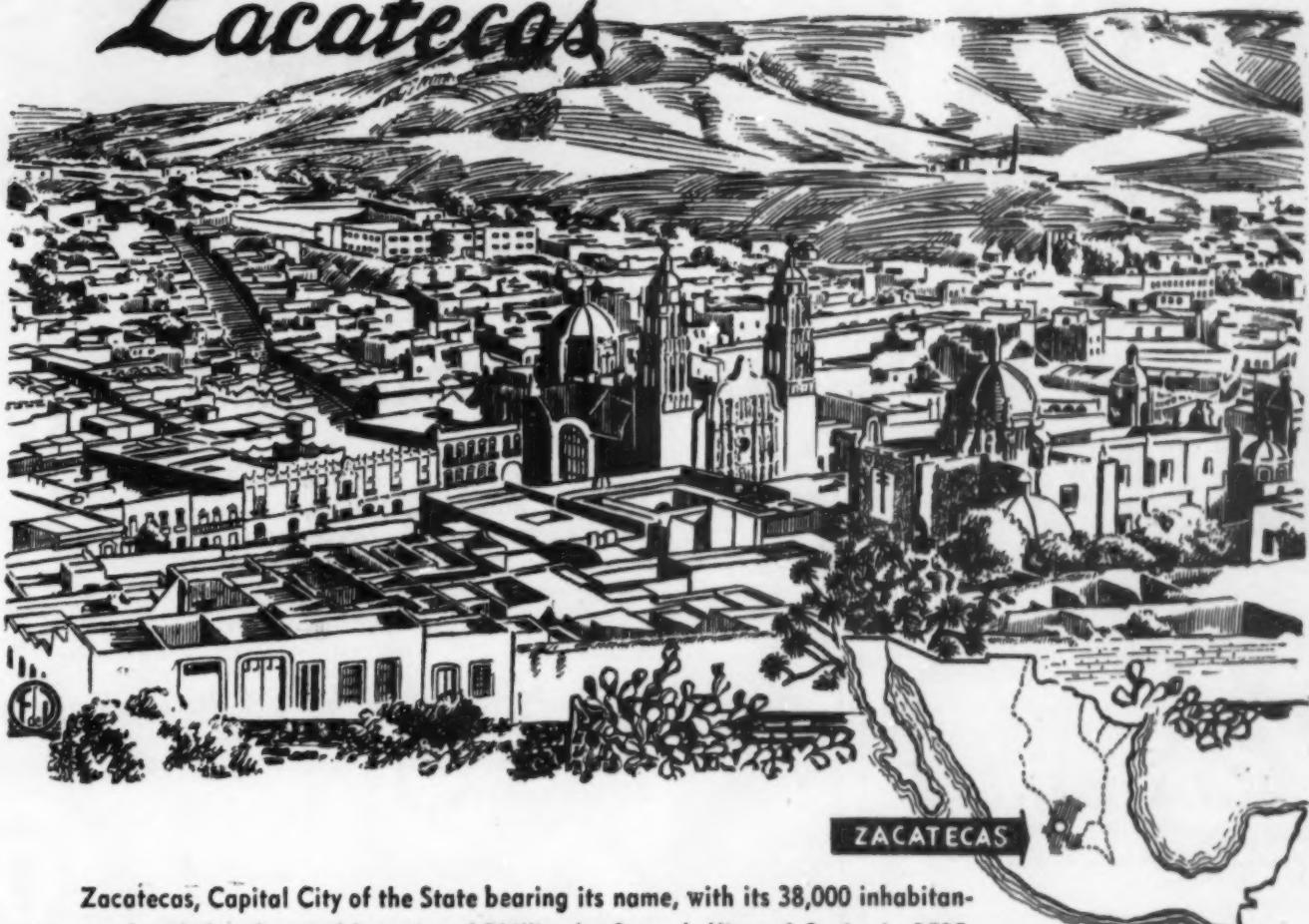
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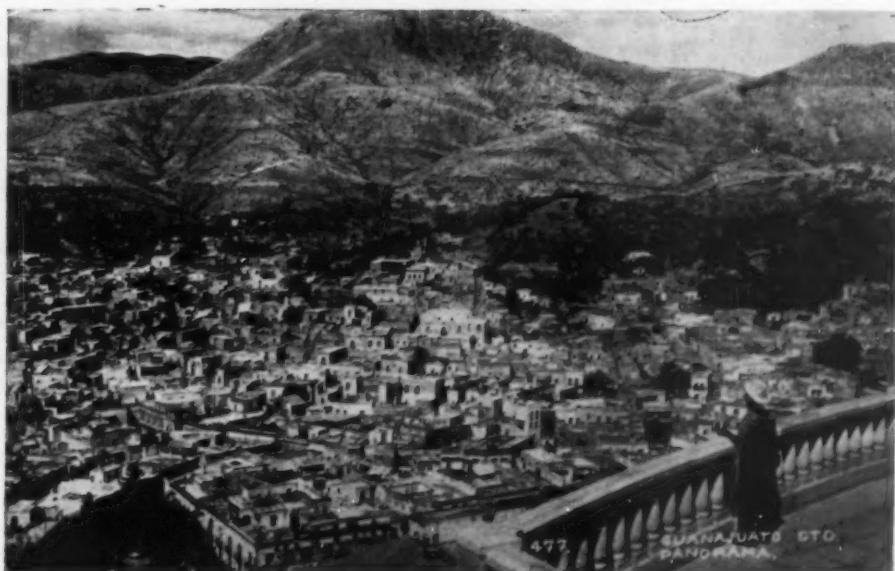
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EDITOR

## The Problem of Migratory Labor

**T**HE mass migration of unskilled labor to the United States is one of the most serious problems confronted today by Mexico's economy. This migration results from quite logical economic reasons of the extremely wide difference in the earning possibilities on each side of the border—of eight pesos a day as a maximum compensation in Mexico as against a minimum of eight dollars a day in the United States.

In reality, there is no actual surplus of unskilled labor in Mexico. National agriculture can provide employment for all the hundreds of thousands of laborers who abandon the country. This employment, however, can vouchsafe but a nominal wage, a reward of sheer subsistence. For the landless worker, or even for those who form part of community ejidos with a few hectares of their own soil, agriculture, still largely carried out upon an extremely primitive basis, represents at best a sustained struggle for existence. This meager compensation, on the other hand, is the main reason why national agriculture on the whole is in a retarded state, why Mexico is having such a difficult time in producing sufficient food for its needs.

Paradoxically, the mass migration of Mexican workers might be attributed as much to economic causes as to the country's cultural progress—to the marked decline within recent years in the proportion of illiteracy, to an emergence from an age long "wantlessness," to the awakening among the submerged millions of an urge to achieve a better life. The thousands of schools that have been created by the government, added to the new highways and railways, are achieving a social transformation throughout the rural regions—they are lifting the country from cultural and physical isolation. They are creating new incentives.

With an annual birth-rate of forty-three to a thousand inhabitants, which comes near being the highest in the world, and a mortality rate diminishing as result of higher cultural standards, Mexico's population is increasing by 800,000 inhabitants each year. And yet, in contrast with this increase, Mexico's economically active population has decreased from 34% in 1910 to 30% in 1950. These figures reveal that economically Mexico is not fully absorbing its increase in population, for in proportion with this increase it must provide employment for at least 250,000 additional workers each year.

This employment, over a period of years, was partially provided by the expanding national industries. Industrialization, in fact, was generally regarded as the solution of the country's economic dilemma. But the process of industrialization has reached at this time

a phase of temporary saturation. The field of basic industries, such as the manufacture of steel, cement, cotton, woolen or synthetic textiles, shoes, beer or cigarettes, is now more than amply covered. The manufacture of such staple goods is determined in volume by the restricted scope of the available market. Mexico's industrialization will therefore have to extend to the production of less staple though highly necessary items which are at present being purchased abroad.

This production, however, must be carried out upon a much higher technical level. It requires expert knowledge and skill, that is to say, a specialized, a more highly trained personnel than that employed in the basic industries. A factory undertaking the production of machine tools, appliances or instruments would have to begin as a school; it would have to create its own personnel by giving it a thorough training, and this, obviously, is a very costly and difficult process. Thus, while the country abounds in unskilled workers, its future industrial expansion is seriously impeded by the lack of men with technical training.

This unbalanced condition in labor supply is clearly reflected in the high disparity of the wage-scale, in the wide difference of wages earned by skilled and unskilled workers. For while eight pesos a day is about the highest wage an unskilled laborer can earn in Mexico City, taxicab drivers earn an average of forty pesos a day, skilled workers in the petroleum or metallurgical industries earn at least fifty pesos, and the daily wage of a railroad machinist is about a hundred pesos.

Under present conditions, the skilled worker, earning from 500 to 2,000% more than the unskilled, enjoys a quite privileged position. Unlike the unskilled worker, whose employment is largely determined by the law of supply and demand, he is, moreover, protected by his union card and very favorable labor laws. His earnings, in terms of money, have multiplied during the past ten years even beyond the extremely inflated costs of living. And although the wages of unskilled labor have also multiplied during the same period of time, its real income, as revealed by official statistics, has dropped from 100 to 79.64%.

It is this decline in real earnings of unskilled labor, added to the lure of incomparably higher wages that may be earned in the United States, that impels hundreds of thousands of Mexicans to cross the northern border.

It cannot be doubted that for Mexico this enormous drain of man-power—the loss of working hands it needs for the development of its own economy—represents a very serious problem, a problem which, unfortunately, has no immediate solution.

# Rafaelita

By Mary W. Kremers

**R**AFAELA was born last night,—a lovely little Indian with a chata nose and a mass of black strands above her low forehead. Her name must be Rafaela in honor of the Saint on whose day she chose to enter this world. It was the 24th of October, the day of San Rafael Arcangel. Later on another name will be added to this one. It may be Lupe, in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe, or Juana, in honor of her father Juan.

Rita, her mother, had worked hard all day. It was Tuesday, the day for washing and ironing the heavy wash. Rita's work was washing, and ironing all week long. She seemed to love it, and the love showed in the beauty of the finished work. The ruffles on my white blouses could face the world with defiance, because Rita had starched and ironed them to perfection.

She was only sixteen, and had already lost two children at birth. This time it would not be so. An Infermera, a sort of midwife, who makes a business of helping expectant mothers, had offered her services, that is, for a sum of seventy-five pesos, immediately. When the baby arrived she would expect the rest. When we handed her the seventy-five, she apologized, explaining that she had to know if our intentions were honorable. Too many times a woman would not come to her at the last minute, but would have her baby in a dark corner of her hut, or under a tree, or even in a corn field. Far too many children were lost that way.

Rita had grown wider, and wider, and for her short stature, began to look like a huge round barrel. It was good to see her broad Indian features, always

smiling, never complaining. Whenever I asked her how she felt, she always answered, "Bien." "Pero, Rita," I would say, "no pains?" Her answer was always the same. "No, not even one."

\* \* \*

Yesterday noon she came to the kitchen door smiling. "Señora, I think it is time for me to go." While she wrapped some of her belongings in her faded blue rebozo, I excitedly gave Pedro, the driver, his orders to take her there quickly, it was very "urgente." I would tell her husband Juan that he need not work any more to-day. This was a very special occasion.

To my great surprise, two hours later, Rita walked in through the gate. Smilingly she told me, "The nurse says I must bathe myself with hot water, and then I must come back." "But Rita," said I dumfounded, "haven't you taken baths here every day, as I always tell you?"

"Si Señora, I bathe myself every day, but the nurse insisted I must bathe again."

After her bath she told me that she preferred to walk back to the little house of the Infermera. I would not hear of it, and again insisted that she must ride. After all it was at least one kilometer of walking along a dusty unpaved road. "There is no hurry Señora," she said serenely. "The baby will not arrive until after sun-set."

And so it did. Just as the sun set over the hills of Chipitlan, Rafaela greeted the world. At seven-thirty I went in to see Rita. There she lay, complacently smiling under a serape, on a bed with nothing but a thin faded mattress, and a clean well patched sheet. At her side, wrapped in a bright pink blanket, was Rafaela, a tiny human being, just one half hour old. Her little snub nose, and her pinky white face reminded me of a squishy rubber ball, although her head was completely covered with a mass of thick black hair.

I asked Rita, "Are you feeling all right,—did you suffer much?" Her answer I shall always remember. "Pues no, Señora. If I do not suffer more in life than I have suffered now, then I will never suffer." Proudly she smiled down at her little Indita.



Oil.

By Camps Rivera.



Water Color.

By Myrtle Frankovitz.

## Señor, it is a Pump

By Hal Masson

**W**E were all feeling fine about the pump until my father came home at dark. We were still out in the yard beside the well but we had pumped enough water to prove to everybody that the pump truly worked, and for the last hour we were just standing around feeling good and telling Nacho how clever he was.

We heard my father come in from the cantina and we knew that as soon as he saw the metal drain pipe gone from the wall at the front door he would come right out to see who had dared to move it. Then we were depending on the pump to do the rest.

He came through the brick doorway into the yard and he walked to the well where we all waited without saying anything. He pushed back his sombrero with one hand, rubbing his forehead with the other hand where the sombrero had creased his skin, then he put both hands on his hips.

"You may speak," he said.

Nobody said anything.

"Rosario," he said to Mama, "I go to the cantina for the necessity of knowing the affairs of the village. Why do you permit my house to be torn down in my absence?" My father did not shout. My father never shouts. He is a genius; he sits in the shade of the mango tree in the plaza in the afternoons and gives advice to the other men about the affairs of Santa Guadalupe, and he sits in the cantina at night for the same purpose. Even though he sits so much in the shade his skin is as dark as the men who never leave their work in the fields or their fishing nets on the lake.

Mama said, "It is not the house, Papa. It is only that silly pipe. Now it serves a purpose."

"The pipe served a purpose where it was," my father said.

Mama could not argue this matter even if it was not exactly true because to argue would not be right in front of me and my sister, Maria. But Maria could argue with him, if she smiled; and since my father

loves her very much, and she is very pretty, and smiles often, she argues often when Mama can not.

"The pipe would have had a purpose, Papa," she said, smiling very strongly, "if you had put up a gutter to carry the roof water to it. But you never put up the gutter."

"Such things take time and much thought," my father said, reproving her. "I do not like to work on roofs. It makes me inferno of the stomach. But you are a woman and yet a child and would not understand such things."

Then my father looked at Nacho standing beside me. Nacho looked very tall and proud. He has black curly hair that flees from his sombrero when he rides and black eyes that dance when he is pleased. Nacho was twenty-one, just two years older than Maria, and very excellently clever. All the other young men who tried to make burro's eyes at Maria got sent away by my father. But Nacho, who had traveled as far as Mexico City and even up to California, must have learned some things there, because he never came to see Maria. He came to see me instead. He would walk home with me from the schoolhouse and tell me stories in the yard. Once he made me a fine box-kite like one he saw in San Francisco, and he made me a bow and some arrows. It appeared he would never finish the arrows because he would stop his work and his stories and he would be looking over my shoulder.

I thought he was trying to remember all the things he had seen in the United States, but I turned around once and saw Maria smiling at him from the kitchen.

\* \* \*

Nacho was standing beside the pump and I was standing beside Nacho, waiting for him to show my father the way it brought water from the well without a pail.

My father said, "Nacho, I have permitted you to come into my house because you have been good company for our Chico. I have even admired the skill of your hands. But now you have destroyed my faith

in you by damaging my house. Explain this strange use of a pipe, then depart."

"Señor," Nacho said proudly, "it is a pump."

"A pump!" my father said. "I am old enough to have sired you, and in all of Jalisco I have not heard of such a thing. Therefore, it does not exist. Kindly explain why you took this very fine piece of pipe from its ordained location without permission, then you may leave."

In such cases I have heard young men say to older men, "It was a mistake, Señor, a foolish prank," then steal away. But Nacho did not.

He put his hand on the pump as if it were the shoulder of his brother and he made a long speech to my father.

"Señor, in the many hours I have been privileged to enjoy the company of your son in this fine house I have observed an insignificant fact which has grieved my heart. This child, Maria—" he said it like a grand-uncle—"daily draws water from this well in a bucket attached to a rope. This is strenuous on the child's little hands and on her young shoulders. Then she must strain the leaves and insects from the water before it is fit for cooking."

"The well, I admit, is not the best," my father said. "It is shallow and lies under a tree so that leaves fall into it. But I plan to build a new well some day."

"Some day, Papa?" Maria said, smiling very strongly.

"You have never tried to dig a well in sand," my father said. "The sand rolls in on you as fast as you dig it out. Do not think your father a fool because he uses his head more and his hands less, Maria. Some day I may find an idea that will make us all rich."

"Muy bravo!" Nacho said, taking the side of my father. "You are a man who discerns many things. Mira! When I was on a fishing boat at Monterey, California, I saw such a pump as this one. It did not have a fine handle, but on this one I put such a handle."

"And cut a hole in my pipe to do it."

"Yes, Señor," Nacho agreed. "For the more facility in getting the water when your well is low and you cannot take water out with a bucket. This pipe goes right to the bottom, and for such occasions when the leaves get stirred up I have put a strainer in the inside of the pipe so the water comes out clean."

He pushed back his sombrero so his curls fell over his face and he rubbed his hands together, smiling. "I have observed also that when you can no longer get clean water with a bucket you must pay the hotel-owner, Maximino Iturbe, the gross sum of thirty centavos for bottled water from Guadalajara. It is a robbery. It is my wish that the clean water from this pump will save you—"

It was a long speech and my father was not accustomed to hearing long speeches that he did not make himself, so he stopped Nacho.

"Do you tell me that water runs up-hill in this contraption? Or do you plan to tip the well?"

Nacho smiled again, and Maria and I smiled. Everybody smiled but my father.

Nacho worked the handle, up and down, up and down. No water came. He worked harder and got puffiness in the face. I helped him, but still no water came. My father began to smile a little.

"Maybe there is a leaf caught in the strainer," Maria said.

"It is possible," Nacho admitted sadly. "Or maybe we will have to prime it again."

But just when he was going to stop, the pump

coughed a little and spit some water on the ground. Then it spit some more and we put the bucket under it and pumped it full.

Nacho stopped then and made a mistake. He let his eyes rest on Maria, then on my father. "There it is," he said. "It is yours for the pleasure I have had in your hospitality. I hope that when I have a wife of my own she may have the use of such a well."

He had the look of a dog sniffing the pork chops at the carneería and right away my father began to look like the butcher when he sees the dog.

He made a step towards Nacho and he raised his finger. "Amigo," he said, "once again you have impressed me with the skill of your hands. But—" He stopped and waved us others into the house. We stopped in the doorway and listened anyway. "—But," my father went on, "I must say you have betrayed my confidence in you. There are many things I have planned for my property. Suppose you decide to upset these plans. This unfinished wall of fine brick and this pile of bricks with which I will finish the wall for a house for my daughter when I find a man worthy of her, these tiles for the roof, this twine with which I will make her man a fine throw-net. Suppose you decide to put them to some foolish use. I cannot risk it. Leave this place now."

Nacho said, "I promise, Señor, that I will not touch anything again without—"

But my father stopped him. He put his finger right on the chest of Nacho. "And if I ever suspect you are throwing the eyes of a burro at Maria I will run you out of the village. Now leave my house. The vision of you gives me pain."

Before Nacho went through the gate he said, "Very well, Señor. Then I do not promise anything."

We were all very occupied in the house when my father came in. He said, "In the morning I will dismantle that contraption."

\* \* \*

That is something my father did not do. In the morning he went indeed to the pump and tried to pull the handle out, but it was attached with bolts and my father does not have a wrench. He then tried to pull the pipe out of the well but observed that it was cemented tight to the brick wall.

He did not appear to object that I was watching him, and when he failed to destroy the pump he pushed back his sombrero and sat down. He thought deeply for some moments, then he said, "This can be a lesson for your future, Chico. I could, indeed, remove it with a heavy hammer but I refrain because considered judgment is superior to a rapid display of energy. The pipe is ruined for its purpose and the contraption is not unattractive."

He left immediately for the plaza. When I went to the tienda later to trade eggs for pan dulces he was sitting with only three men. All the others, I remembered, had departed the day before to plant their tierra on the other side of the mountain that sits over Santa Guadalupe. Each year we do this so that the seed is in the ground when the rain starts.

When I returned from the tienda, I saw that Maximino Iturbe was sitting on his big English horse talking to my father. I said, "Good morning," to them and they all said, "Walk with God, Chico," and I went home.

When I was in the house I heard their voices out in our yard, so I went there. My father was showing the pump to the men proudly, and Maximino Iturbe,

Continued on page 59



Oil.

By José A. Monroy.

## Braceros Farm for Mexico

By Verne A. Baker

**A**LONG the west coast of Mexico, from Nogales on the Arizona border in Sonora south through the states of Sinaloa and Nayarit to Guadalajara in Jalisco, an agricultural revolution is under way. One sees local farmers astride new tractors or bulldozers, cultivating the land or leveling it for irrigation, spraying crops to control insect pests or spreading chemical fertilizer to restore its productive power. Braceros, or farm hands, returning from work in neighboring U.S. states, are rapidly taking the lead in applying these new methods they have learned, bringing prosperity to themselves and brightening the outlook for the nation's food production. They may hold the key to Mexico's perennial agricultural problem, which has been marked by the movement of dissatisfied rural workers to the cities or abroad in search of better wages or working conditions.

In 1948 the United States and Mexico signed an agreement on recruiting Mexicans to work on U.S. farms where sufficient local help could not be found—a practice begun in 1942 under a wartime arrangement. In the first year of the peacetime program, 35,345 Mexicans came north, and the figure rose sharply thereafter, topping 197,000 in 1952. After completing their contract period in the United States, many of the men have used their earnings to go into farming for themselves at home. Mexico is helping to insure the success of their operation by furnishing land, water, and new highways. Practically all the men have picked up some English, plus experience equivalent to an intense vocational agriculture course.

At the start, it may have seemed to Mexico that the U.S. employers were the principal beneficiaries of the international hiring plan, but now it turns out that Mexico is the long-run winner. The step from the wooden, ox-drawn plow (still the prevalent cultivation tool in many areas) to modern diesel-power-

ed farm machinery is shorter than it seems, and the new farming practices are opening up the possibility of Mexico's becoming a major agricultural producer. Currently, though, much of Mexico, like Texas, is suffering from the effects of prolonged drought.

In the beginning, the migratory program was not so successful. Many of the Mexicans recruited were unsuited for the work. Often they were barbers or taxi drivers, or had filled other city jobs and were not physically qualified for hard farm labor. Then too, there were occasions for complaint by the Mexican Government about the men's working or living conditions. But the first recruits were soon replaced by capable men from the smaller towns, and generally things have worked out well between the U.S. farmers and these men employed in planting and harvesting their crops.

Several cities in agricultural areas of Mexico are designated as recruiting centers, with Guadalajara and Monterrey the largest. Mexican Government officials make the initial selection, then a U.S. Government agent gives his approval. Afterward, the men are transported to contract centers on the U.S. border, where employers can select or reject whom they like, and workers are free to refuse job offers. The employer must pay transportation and subsistence costs from the recruiting center in Mexico to the work site and back after completion of the job. Workers are given a six-month, renewable contract. They are not allowed to bring their families with them, nor can they jump from one employer to another, but otherwise they face no restrictions in the United States.

In citrus areas the men are paid on a piece-work basis for picking oranges and lemons. The average wage per worker in Ventura Country, California, last year was just over one dollar an hour. For other types of farm work in California they are paid se-

venty-five cents an hour and up. In the citrus zones large clean work camps are provided. The employer is allowed to charge no more than \$1.75 per day for their food, but the fare is good and the kind the men like. Generally about half the men want to renew their contracts. Many return to Mexico to protect land rights there.

It has been estimated that about 60 per cent of the money earned by the Mexican nationals in the United States is sent home—some sources put the figure at about thirty million dollars a year. Officials say that because of their wide distribution, these funds are even more helpful than all the tourist dollars.

Apart from those Mexicans who enter the United States in an approved, legal way, there are of course the hundreds of thousands of "wetbacks," or illegal immigrants, who cross the border on their own seeking work. The U.S. immigration officers sparsely scattered along the line make a gesture of keeping them out, but the job is impossible.

At the California frontier, "wetbacks" gather on the Mexican side of New River, just south of Calexico. When it is dark they simply cross the stream and skirt the town, and they are in the Imperial Valley. The same sort of thing happens in the other border states.

Usually Imperial Valley farmers are delighted to see the Mexicans and put them to work at once. As a result—to the disgust of labor leaders and the annoyance of growers in other parts of the state—wages for farm work are lower in the Imperial Valley than anywhere else in California. Cotton workers there and around Yuma, Arizona, make sixty-five to seventy cents an hour as compared with a dollar an hour in West Fresno County. The employers generally like the men, for, as one told me, "The Mexican wetback is the hardest-working farm laborer in the world. After all, the only thing he wants is work."

In some instances employers have failed to pay for the work performed, and in such cases the illegal immigrants have little or no resource. But these are the exception. Generally the farmers have been fair and honest with the Mexicans; many have also provided living quarters and aid in time of need.

The Immigration Service constantly rounds up groups of "wetbacks" and ships them across the border to Mexico, but many return again and again and often manage to penetrate far inland. One who was finally picked up and sent back to Mexico from a large farm in West Fresno County was on the job again two months later, welcomed "home" by the boss, who knew him as a good worker. After all, nine dollars a day was considerably better than the eight pesos (ninety-three cents) he could have averaged in Mexico. Many, however, have lost their lives in the dangerous trek north across the burning desert sands.

The "wetback" problem seems to be too big for either the United States or Mexico to settle. Throwing the men in jail hasn't helped, and perhaps isn't even fair. They are not vagrants. They want work. U.S. farmers strenuously object to any law that would make them responsible for determining the citizenship of their workers. The present law cannot be made effective despite the best efforts of the Immigration Service. Possibly the future will see new and workable laws, but the only real solution lies in making farming in Mexico sufficiently rewarding so that the men will want to stay home. So the agricultural improvements introduced by the workers who went north legally on contract may in the long run be a big factor in solving the problem of their unauthorized fellow migrants. So far, however, the chronic unemployment or underemployment in the old produc-

cing areas that provide most of the surplus workers remains unrelieved, for the improved techniques have been mainly confined to new farming areas, which have absorbed only a limited number of workers because of the high degree of mechanization. But Mexico is working hard to open up additional land and resettle farmers from overpopulated zones—whether individuals on tiny farms or members of ejidos (collective farms) that are too small for the group.

The states of Sonora and Sinaloa and the new one of Baja California have been helped most by returning braceros. Irrigation is all-important there and many government projects are assuring ample cheap water. Almost unlimited quantities of potential agricultural land remain in mesquite—excellent alluvial soil, for the most part, with level land costing comparatively little to develop into good farming land—and the climate is suitable for raising most staples and many specialties. Cotton, wheat, citrus, and other crops are grown in much the same way as on the farms where the men have worked in California and Arizona.

A trip down the west coast of Mexico now shows a country vastly different from what it was a few years ago. A good hard-surfaced highway is almost completed all the way from Nogales south to Mexico City, along the general route of the railroad. New bridges are spanning the numerous rivers and washes. New trucks are carrying produce on highways where little or nothing had been transported over the old rutty roads. But the overwhelming change the visitor notices upon his return after a few years' absence is the presence of new farms carved out of the mesquite and now in heavy crop production. Places that until recently were only villages now boast that they are the fastest-growing cities on the North American continent. This is particularly true of Mexicali in Baja California and Ciudad Obregón in Sonora. Flourishing farms made possible by a government development program emphasizing dam and highway construction and credit extension are responsible. The Ministry of Hydraulic Resources reports that as a result of the two-and-a-half billion pesos invested in the irrigation program over the past six years, the area benefited throughout the country has been raised from just over two million acres in 1946 to 3,840,000 acres by the end of 1952. A new major development project planned for the Fuerte River Valley in Sinaloa will make available land that should be very suitable for such staple crops as wheat, rice, cotton, flax, sugar cane, and alfalfa, and many specialties such as winter tomatoes, which are now shipped north to the States from around Culiacán, farther south.

The type of farm operation suitable to these areas being opened up by large irrigation projects is not one that can be carried on efficiently, if it can be done at all, with two oxen and a single plow. It requires machinery, most of which will be U.S. machinery. There will be caterpillar and wheel tractors, huge land planes to level the land, and other modern farm implements. The operators of this machinery will be men who know how. All the experienced workers need is help in the form of credit, and the government's National Agricultural and Livestock Credit Bank is there to provide it.

In many areas throughout this west-coast country, the farmers and development people have not even waited for the coming of canal water from the dams, many of which are not yet completed. They have cleared the land of mesquite and brush with bulldozers and let contracts to well-drillers for irrigation wells. On many farms you see shiny new turbine pumps and stationary gasoline or diesel engines to

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# Mexico is Confronting the Problem of Potable Water

By Efrain Kleriga

**T**HIE shortage of potable water and the lack of drainage installation which is prevalent in most of the smaller communities of Mexico is not only the principal cause of their retarded material growth but is also the main cause of endemic disease and high mortality rates throughout a large part of national territory. Mexico, with its extensive arid regions, is, in other words, not only suffering a shortage of water for agricultural purposes, but is actually suffering an acute scarcity of water for human consumption.

Therefore, to create an adequate supply of drinking water is a problem of national importance whose solution defines one of the major aims pursued by the present government, and is one of the important tasks assigned to the Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources.

Sr. Eduardo Chávez, who heads this Secretariat, in a recent interview granted to the press, presented a few basic facts and figures which reveal the veritable scope and gravity of the problem and outlined the plan whereby the government proposes to effectively confront it.

Secretary Chávez pointed out that of the total number of communities in Mexico—90,000 according to the figures of the 1950 census—only 1,800 have a more or less adequate supply of potable water. As to the rest, comprising fifty-eight percent of the nation's population, their supply of water is obtained by most primitive means and is often hardly sufficient for rudimentary needs. Nearly always, moreover, the water thus obtained represents a standing menace for the health of those who are compelled to consume it.

The complete solution of this grave problem—requiring a nominal expenditure of three billion pesos and the coordinated efforts and cooperation of state and municipal governments in addition to the task of the federal government—must of course extend over a considerable period of time. The problem, however, is being confronted systematically, in keeping with the comprehensive plan formulated by the Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources and based on available means.

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The project formulated for the current year represents an investment of one hundred million pesos. Of this amount twenty-eight million pesos will be provided by the Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources, twenty-seven million by municipal administrations and private enterprise, and forty-five million will be obtained through bank credit.

With this appropriation it will be possible to continue the projects under construction, to initiate works in forty communities with a total of 250,000 population, and to conclude the construction of works in ninety communities with a total of one million inhabitants.

According to the figures presented by Secretary Chávez, during the year 1953 the sum of ninety-two

million pesos has been invested in the construction of water works and drainage systems in various parts of the Republic, whereof the sum of eighteen million was furnished through cooperation of local governments and private enterprise, while the rest was provided by the federal budget and bank loans.

Through this investment it was possible during the foregone year to complete water works and drainage installations in sixty-six communities with a total population of 2,308,552.

It must be mentioned that the construction of water works involves diverse and frequently quite serious natural problems, resulting from specific local conditions. One of the most common is that of finding a source of supply which can assure a sufficient permanent volume of water that is fit for human consumption. In many places, such as the cities of Orizaba and Cordoba and the industrial towns in the state of Veraeruz, natural springs have been utilized. In the cities of León, Guadalajara and Aguascalientes dams and reservoirs are being constructed; while in Tampico and Villahermosa river waters are being utilized under proper filtering treatment. In some places sufficient water has been obtained through the drilling of deep wells, while in others cisterns have been constructed for the collection of rain water.

Added to the complicated problem of encountering an adequate and accessible local supply of water, there is often also the problem of lacking means of communication, of railways or highways, which tends to greatly elevate the cost of construction, or forces the engineers in charge to restrict their constructions to materials which may be produced on the spot.

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Secretary Chávez explained that in keeping with the disposition of President Ruiz Cortines, the Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources is especially endeavouring to carry out each local project not as a provisional but as a permanent solution of the problem. With this aim, the operation of water plants is being entrusted to local administrations boards which are being created in each community under direction of the above Secretariat. Thus the local consumers will be in direct charge, assuming the responsibility for administration, conservation and improvement of their plants.

So as to technically and administratively prepare the members of these local boards, special courses are being conducted at this time, which include the basic instruction in accountancy, water chemistry and the operation and maintenance of equipment employed. One hundred and thirteen of these boards are functioning at present in that many communities, administering the task of supplying water for domestic and industrial needs among 1,200,000 inhabitants.

This is a brief summary of the extensive program which is being carried out by the government—a realistically formulated program that is gradually solving one of the major problems confronted by the bulk of Mexico's rapidly growing population.

# Patterns of an Old City

## A HURDY-GURDY MAKES ITS ROUNDS

**B**ASSET squeezed dabs of paint out of various tubes over his palette—Naples yellow, carmine, sienna, burnt umber and zinc white—, commenced mixing them with a palette-knife into the blends he required, then paused, his eyes absentmindedly fixed on the canvas. Below his window down in the street a hurdy-gurdy broke out in an imploring howl.

There he is again, he thought. Regular, punctual. Makes his rounds. Always here at this time of morning. Probably even has an established clientele. Collects his few centavos as a regular tribute. Treads a fixed itinerary, follows a routine. Sells noise—strange merchandise. Provides relief from silence. I suppose it is a necessary thing. Silence is a great burden for most people. The man walks so many blocks a day bearing his load, turns the handle so many thousand times, his cardrums, like an artillery soldier's, calloused, shut from within. Treads an itinerary.

Well, I suppose, that is what I am trying to do myself. Follow a routine. I have always fought against staidness, against prosaic stability. I have always tried to make myself believe that everything I have done has involved an element of adventure, that everything I have ever achieved has entailed a degree of hazard; but the same thing can be said about the man who is making the noise down in the street. Sustained hazard and adventure in the end become a routine... Maybe I too have been merely turning a handle so many thousand times a day.

His eyes were still fixed on the canvas, and now he dipped the tip of his bristle brush in the paint and touched it lightly, tentatively, striving to set his mind on the task. She is priming up now, he thought. Getting herself ready for the session. Clumsy with the stuff. Gums up her eyes with too damn much mascara; pastes on a phony mouth; puts on a flimsy disguise, a puny mask of make believe. Creates a grotesque image of the person she would like to be. Wants me to paint paint instead of skin and flesh. Yes, Señora Doña María Luisa Salcedo, the widow of Ibarra, who has never been painted before in her life and who is now being immortalized by the masterly brush of Horace Basset, nervous as a schoolgirl, for all her makeshift subterfuge, unsuspecting that her immortality will in the end involve the price of... well, at least of a few weeks of board and room.

She will come in here all prettied up and self-conscious, smelling both of Coty and the kitchen, and she will sit down saying, I suppose, the appropriate things, and I will try to understand her Spanish and sustain a sort of conversation in my jumbled Italian and French, and we will wind up with pantomime and crazy gestures and amiable laughing and finally get to work. Then she will sit still and try not to forget to preserve the expression she has selected for her depiction, an expression of avid eyes and a hint of a smile, something between coquettish and demure, a frank and friendly expression, at once soulful and a bit flippant, and on the whole intriguing and attractive. She will assume this expression—which she had probably thoroughly rehearsed before a mirror—and valiantly strive to preserve it, or at least to recapture it each time my brush pauses in the air and I throw her a probing squint-eyed look; but then presently fatigue will get the best of her. Her breathing will become audible and her features congealed in expressionless rigidity.

By Howard S. Phillips

As on countless other similar occasions, it secretly amused him to watch her laborious pose, and he was tempted to make her understand that her effort was actually needless, that regardless of how she endeavoured to look he would paint her not precisely the way he saw her, but the way he thought she ought to look—the way she might have looked if she were considerably younger, or even more, seemed younger, fresher, more vitally vibrant, within her present age—an age which thus would become indeterminate—and were endowed with such subtle inner qualities which lend character and charm to a human face. It would be undoubtedly her portrait: it would define an unmistakable likeness. One would immediately know that it was she. But it would be much more than that. It would be, as all his work, an excellent painting, a picture that beyond its specific theme possessed an independent value as a work of art.

That was the way he had painted his portraits, the hundreds of portraits that were scattered far and wide in many countries, the images of men and women who through the magic of paint and touch of genius emerged from commonplaceness, were rid of inhibitions, were cleansed of vulgarity, purged of baseness, mediocrity and evil, and imbued with drama, with profundity, with heroism, nobility and beauty. That was what the signature of Horace Basset stood for. Or that at least was what he believed.

And this belief was not entirely founded on vanity. It did not wholly stem from self-deception. Though at the outset of his career an innate self-assurance helped him to gain his foot-hold, in his mature years his confidence came from solid achievement, from an irrefutable conviction that his fame and success were the quite logical reward of genius. His triumph as an artist was the product of supreme egotism, of an unshakable belief that he was a superior being, a man apart, a man with a godly spark.

And yet—and this of course he did not know, he would never allow himself to know—his very egotism, his sense of superiority, his hidden disdain for mankind, preserved him intrinsically aloof and stood in the way of real closeness and penetration. Lacking sympathy for people, actually disliking them at heart, what he painted was an illusion, a fantasy, an adroit manipulation, rather than a veritable disclosure of his subject's inner self. His personality had a stamp of grandeur; his style was a dim echo of Sargent, of Velazquez and Rembrandt. It bore a kind of surface semblance of masterwork. His portraits looked impressive hanging over ornate fireplaces, so impressive in fact that one seldom perceived the absence of pulsing hearts inside depicted breasts.

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The hurdy-gurdy ceased its strident lamentations, and now there was the usual noise of traffic in the street, an undisturbing noise of wheels bouncing over a bumpy pavement, of human speech or footsteps, of an occasional vendor's outcry, and the sustained reverberant undertone of the outspread city. It was pleasant, he thought, to sit in this room with his easel and paints, to feel sheltered and secure, if only for the present, to sense the satisfaction of having grasped a plaque within an alien midst, to yield to the old and buoyant

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# A Sonora

## Ghost Town

By John W. Hilton

HERE is something symbolic about the little locomotive with no place to go—sitting on the outskirts of La Colorada. It is symbolic of the country, of the people, and of boom mining towns in general. A more methodical community would have run the train over the track to some point where it could be salvaged, before they took up the rails; but things are not done this way in mining towns, as many of the ghost cities of our Western deserts still testify. Personally, I am glad they didn't think to move the train first. It makes a good landmark, although it did give me quite a shock the first time I saw it.

We were lost, when we stumbled into La Colorada—lost and tired, and disgusted with ourselves and the people who had tried to direct us on a "sure-fire short cut to Hermosillo. Actually, it was largely our own fault that we had missed the trail, for we had left in plenty of time to have made the whole trip in daylight, had we kept going. Our path, however, took us through an entirely different type of desert, behind the famous Bacatete Mountains where the wild Yaquis live. Howard and I both have collecting urges, and every few miles one or the other saw something that simply had to be caught and preserved, or a plant that must be collected and photographed. We had a wonderful time, paid little attention to the lowering sun till it suddenly disappeared behind the rugged towers and battlements of the Bacatetes. Our friend told us that we couldn't miss the road—that all we had to do was to follow the main traveled trail, and everything would work out fine. So far, they had been right; there had been nothing but the very faintest side roads leading off, and the route led over fairly smooth land where a road can be pretty good without much, if any, attention.

We kept forging ahead through the gathering gloom, and wondering whether we would be able to get a room, so late, in Hermosillo: for we were actually only about halfway there, due to our dallying.

Finally the trail led out onto a flat glass-covered plateau, that ran for seemingly interminable miles. We could see a little light in the distance, but it was a long time before we came close enough to discover that it was coming from a house. When we came to a stop in front of it, we saw that it was a whole settlement of adobe houses. This one, which was a combination store and restaurant, was the only one boasting a light in the window. We went inside and were gratified to find that they would serve us a hot meal—such as they had. They assured us we were on the "main highway" to Hermosillo, and that we would have no trouble in finding our way, espe-



Oil.

By José Bardasano.

cially if we could wait there for an hour or so until the moon came up.

It took the "hour or so" for the lady to prepare our meal, but the night stretched before us now, and we were in no particular rush. It was a cattle community, and dozens of cowboys were standing or sitting around in the street, while their horses waited patiently at hitching posts or scrubby trees. Someone started singing, a few doors down, and in a short time there was a crowd, and the singing became louder.

We felt better when we left the little shop, after the hot food and coffee. Our misgivings the early evening had made way for complete confidence and a sort of anticipation of a trip through this stretch of wild country at night. The moon was up now, and the singers had gathered on the banks of a large pool, about a hundred feet wide. Most of them were dressed in white, and the moonlight on their clothing, contrasted with the shimmering water, made a picture worth remembering.

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We continued on the same road, and it began to look as though everyone was right about its being impossible to get off it. Just about the time we were ready to congratulate ourselves on this good luck, we came to a fork in the road. We got out and looked at the tracks revealed by our headlights. All four agreed that the most travel was on the right road. The trails didn't fork at a wide angle. In fact, we thought they would probably come together again farther along.

No road of this sort is straight; so at first, we thought little of it when we came to twists and bends. There was one disturbing thing that finally became evident, however. The moon had been shining in the left side of the car when we left the cattle camp, but now we were heading right into it. We were heading north (we hoped), and this trail kept bearing to the east.

At last we came to another branch in the road. The most travel went straight ahead, but the trail to the left looked as if it would take us back to the one we should have taken. We turned left, and the road got no better fast. Soon we were climbing gently and could see a jagged range of hills ahead. A canyon opened up before us, and the road led around winding curves that had been graded by an engineer who knew his business. This was no ordinary hit-or-miss desert trail. We began to feel better about the whole thing, for we were headed in the right direction again, and the road was obviously going somewhere, even though we could see no signs of recent travel.

The moon went behind a bank of clouds before we emerged from the canyon, but we could see the glimmer of another light ahead, and we felt the relief that can be appreciated only by those who have lost their way in a strange and wild country. We were surprised to see a soldier standing in front of the open door in the lighted building. Several others were sitting round a table, inside, playing cards. Here at last was someone who could tell us the distance and the way to Hermosillo. The sentry stepped forward when we stopped. He was polite enough, but insisted that it would be impossible for him or anyone else to direct us, in the dark, to Hermosillo. He said that from here on the roads were very bad, and changed with each rain. A couple of his companions came to the door and substantiated his statements, so we decided the best thing to do was to camp and try to get a little sleep out of what was left of the night. We did find out that the town was called La Colorada, and there was a woman here who would serve us breakfast. We hated to unpack all our cooking equipment, so this was at least an encouraging note.

The town was a great deal larger than we had supposed. We could see by our headlights that some of the buildings had cost a great deal. This bothered us a little, because we did not remember hearing about anything like this little town in the vicinity of Hermosillo. After winding through several more narrow streets, we emerged on the edge of town and made camp in a level spot. It was good to lie down and relax, after the anxiety of the night. My arms ached from holding the car over the bumpy road, and a burning sensation between my shoulder blades told me that I had driven enough for one stretch.

It was the howling of coyotes that awakened me. I raised up in my sleeping bag, and looking around, I got one of the shocks of my life. The moon had come out from behind the clouds, and things were almost as bright as day. There, not two hundred feet away, was a locomotive (or the ghost of one). It looked like something out of a museum, or a railroad "ad" on "fifty years of progress." I shook my head and rubbed my eyes to be sure that this was not part of a weird dream. The little engine was still there, headed right in my direction. I looked around for the tracks, but none could be seen. This had me baffled.

Silently I crawled out of my sleeping bag and walked over to the apparition. I actually felt its rusty cowcatcher before I could believe fully in its reality. Then I saw, at my feet, the ends of the rails. The rest had been taken away. I realized that the level spot we had picked for our camp was in reality an old railroad bed. I crawled rather sheepishly back into my sleeping bag, and was glad that the rest of the party had not awakened to see me parading around in my shorts, at three in the morning, inspecting a decrepit piece of rolling stock.

The next morning I was quite nonchalant when my companions peered out of their sleeping bags at the little train. I didn't tell them I had already made a complete inspection.

The woman who served meals was very old and very talkative. She had some ripe papayas on her trees in the patio, and we each had a half of one of these delicious fruits with a little lime juice, for a starter. It was a fine breakfast. The old woman, who had been a young girl in the inn when La Colorada was at its height, was more than willing to entertain us with yarns of "the good old days." By far the best of them was the story of the empty graveyard:

"You must, by all means, see this so interesting spot before you leave," she insisted. "It was built at great expense by some of your countrymen who operated the mine. This was a great gold mine in its time, and the vein was so rich and wide that it looked as if it would last for many lifetimes. These men felt that when they died they would like to be buried in something a little better than the 'Campo Santo' where the common miners were put to rest; so they organized what you Americans call a 'club.' The town was large, then, and they rented a big room where

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## Prodigal

By Hannah Kahn

**T**HE river cut the town apart...  
The town sent me away...  
The people I forgot with time;  
The river, till this day,  
Ripples through my mind and eye  
And murmurs through my sleep  
As though there were an unsigned pact  
That both of us must keep.  
Sometime, some year, I shall return...  
Penitent, alone;  
The river winding through the town  
Will claim me for its own.



Tempera.

By Juan O'Gorman.

## A City of Legends

By Adams Davis

THE Valley of Mexico is one of the most spectacular elongated depressions in the entire world. To appreciate the broad panorama at its best, climb to the heights of Chapultepec, or up the slopes of old Ajusco, or along the craggy ridges of the Sierra Nevada in the early morning when the shifting, wind-blown mists hang low over the valley, or in the late afternoon when the sun's rays, cut by the clouds into varying shafts and forged into a myriad of colors, blink over the lakes. To the eastward are the twin peaks, Popocatepetl, the Smoking Mountain, and Ixtacihuatl, the Sleeping Lady, raising their majestic heights to the mirrored vaults of heaven. Ajusco dominates the southern sierras, a hoary old peak of infinite age, who, in his anger, once threw his fiery stones and poured his molten lava over a large area of the valley floor, inundating villages of prehistoric peoples who were the fathers of the aboriginal civilization of the continent. To the west of the valley are low hills, scattered without pattern, and far to the northward, beyond the mysterious ruins of Teotihuacán and a score of leagues distant, the slopes merge into the mountains of Pachuca.

The valley's floor is consistently level. There are remnants of lakes—Xaltoean, Zumpango, Texcoco, San Cristóbal, Chaleo, Xochimilco—which once largely covered it, leaving only small, low islands for the people of the many Indian tribes. Small hills of uncertain age rise from the floor—Peñón de los Baños, Cerro del Chapultepec, Cerrito del Tepeyac, Cerro de la Estrella, and others—all famous in the legendary lore of the region. On the encircling mountainous ridges is a weaving belt to green, the forests, many of whose time-worn and venerable old patriarchs witnessed the dismal scenes of "the Sad Night" and the victorious entry of the Conquistador into the fabled city of Tenochetitlán. Villages, towns, haciendas, and churches dot the entire view. Dusty or paved roads, highways, and green lines of maguey cross and reeross, cutting the land into fantastic patterns.

But this is only the grand perspective of the panorama. Turn your gaze upon the city—the city which is Clio's favorite love in all the New World, the city which is of the woof and warp of history itself. Three successive Indian nations ruled the spot—the Toltecas, the Chichimecas, the Aztecs—and each left its footprints in the rich earth of the valley's floor. The Spanish came, conscienceless bands of conquerors principally interested in the acquisition of gold and the saving of Indian souls, and for three centuries they held sway over the valley and former island capital. A new race and a new nation appeared. They are making a metropolis out of a time-aged and venerable old city.

But old evidences remain to remind the visitor that here is the physical stuff of which legends are made; chessboards of ancient churches, palaces, houses, prisons, parks, and streets—and the great Plaza Mayor, or Zócalo as it is called today, which is both the center and the vortex of the teeming color that is Old Mexico. The cathedral dominates the scene, a prodigious old pile whose towering spires overtop the turrets of the Great Palace, where the Spanish viceroys once held court. It was the focus of the viceroyal regime of New Spain, for within its walls were the public offices of the government, legislative chambers, a brace of barracks, a prison, and even a botanic garden. Today a president occupies the finely appointed old viceregal chamber and appears once a year during the hours of night to thrill a cheering populace with the old revolutionary cry of Dolores. The Ayuntamiento ("Municipal Building") and the portales filled with tradesmen's wares border on the other sides, while at one corner a new edifice has been built in the architecture style of the Palacio Municipal.

Many of the city's ancient arteries radiate into the Zócalo, some of which have lost their romantic old names of Santo Domingo, Monterilla, Monnaie, or Los Flamencos, and into each in turn run narrow

calles, callejones, or pasillos which have borne the burdens of centuries. Here is the lap of the mother of legends, for into the Zócalo, as one visitor of a century ago remarked, constantly pours "a flood of human beings, which is always changing, and ever in motion, and you have only to mix in this crowd for a few moments to get acquainted with Mexican life in all its diversified phases of vice and virtue, of splendor and misery." Here in the shadows of evening the narrow streets and the passing throng are transplanted by the imagination back through the years to another age; the revolutionary soldado struts along with his "common girl" by his side, the bandit from the foothills saunters casually with his two guns from his hips, the proud ranchero makes his gallantly caparisoned horse prance and curve as he acknowledges the glances of admiring eyes, the old stoop-shouldered aguador ("water-carrier") dog-trots with short, shuffling paces bent low under the heavy weight of his "chochocol" of unglazed earthenware, a lover softly sings beneath a balcony, and little bands of musicians stroll through the crowds singing the timeold corridos, those legendary tales of the country which have been set to music.

But modern contrivances of man have made difficult the work of the mind's eye in imagining days long-since gone, and of the memory in retelling the tales and legends which still cling to the portales, wrought-iron balconies, and cobblestoned pavements. Electric lights gleam from street lamps, from shop windows, driving the imaginary lovers indoors; the tram car rumbles along on metallic feet drowning out the strains of the unseen, but still faintly heard, singers; and raucous-toned automobiles race by, chasing the phantom ranchero from the calle. But somehow the old tales and legends live on, satisfied as it were to bask in their past glory; and the modern Mexican, who combines the extraordinarily brilliant imagination of the jovial, fun-loving Spaniard and the taciturn, sad-faced Indian, aids as best he can in the living.

Somehow, amidst the din of the modern metropolis, new tales and growing legends are born, to be told and retold until they become a part of the folklore of the country; legends of Emiliano Zapata, or Pancho Villa, or of older and more respected revolutionary figures. Some of them seem farfetched and a little out of place in the dim shadows of the old streets, such as the modern tale that Thomas Alva Edison was a Mexican, born of an ancient and respected family, but one which had been impoverished by the internal strife of the country; "and this Tomás, Señor, being very poor and in need of money for his tortillas and frijoles, went to the Estados Unidos where he became a very famed and respected man, for he made machines that talk and sing and the lights which you now see lighting the whole city. He was a very great man, Señor." And if you are not careful he will tell you the whole story.

Perhaps it is not without reason that La muy Leal, Insigne e Imperial Ciudad de Mexico has been called "The City of Legends."

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Legends have been defined as folk tales handed down from the past, stories supposed to be historical in nature but not subject to verification. An antiquarian has defined them as being popular beliefs arbitrarily attached to persons or places. A writer has called them historical traditions gone astray, because most of them have stemmed from events, personages or facts which once actually happened or existed but which have been added to, subtracted from, or otherwise changed by numerous raconteurs and succeeding generations. A historian of the evolution of history

has said that they fall into two groups; the folk tale which was fashioned by no single brain but which suddenly appeared fully grown to meet a particular social need; and the invented legend which was created long after events with which it deals, a romance flattering a person, city, locality, or nation.

The origins of most legends are shrouded in mystery or have been lost in a long-forgotten past; few can be definitely traced to a historical event. With the passing of decades and even centuries they have developed from a single, commonplace occurrence into an almost supernatural happening of grandiloquent importance. Some stemmed from strange and not understood events looked upon with fear by superstitious aborigines who witnessed them. Others had their foundation roots in everyday gossip, and a few, perhaps, were created out of whole cloth. But regardless of their origin or their constantly changing details, they reflect the thoughts, customs, traditions, conditions of life, and aspirations of a people who have usually passed from a simple to a more complex state of society.

The legend, then, is a grand conglomerate in which are to be found some claims of historical truth, but the basic elements have usually been so warped by many and successive narrators as to paint the incidents in vividly etched colors rather than in more accurate prosaic shades. Its tellers make liberal use of rhetorical distortion in giving persons noble attitudes and sentiments, and of epic distortion in adding dramatic details and speeches, and grouping facts and incidents without relation to the occurrences to better enhance their effect.

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Once in the Plaza de Santo Domingo I sat talking with "an old one."

We lounged on a curbstone of the portales, the long twenty-eight columned front porch of a block-long house reputed to have been built by the Conqueror himself. Underneath the pillars sat the letter writers behind their antiquated and time-worn "writing machines," for to this spot come the remnants of the entire city, from the filthy and shifty-eyed lépero to the proudly uniformed but unlettered army colonel, and the steady click-clack of their machines had lent a queerly modern touch to the ancient aspect of the old square. Over toward the left was the patriarchal church itself, from which the plaza had been named; in front were time-frescoed buildings which had housed the inquisition but which now protect the unorthodox, without, however, offering a very voluminous cloak of protection for the orthodox; to the right amidst the other tiendas was the little bookshop whose proprietor was always sick and whose one clerk—a chubby, round-faced damsel of uncertain age—was not permitted to price the various volumes I desired. Overhead the rain clouds raced and danced, twisted and twined, slowly gaining form and substance for the torrent that was soon to come.

We had spent the entire afternoon with stories and legends. His stock seemed endless. What a treasure house he was. And he had spoken with such slow deliberateness and dignity and with such variety of gesticulation that I had little difficulty understanding him. As the shadows began to lengthen from the portales, I said, "Maestro, from whence come all these stories and legends which you have told me?"

"Ah, Señor," he replied, as he languidly drew deeply from his puro and gazed with soft, dreamy, though searching eyes up at the swirling cloud formations, "that is a question which even I cannot answer for I do not know. Perhaps they are of the night wind's telling.

Perhaps they are.



Water Color.

By Charles X. Carlson.

## The Perfect Servant

By Kim Sche

**W**HEN Mr. and Mrs. Shaeffer made up their minds to visit Mexico they got in touch with their good friends, the Palmers, who had just returned to Hollywood from a six-month sojourn below the border. Their purpose was to find out something about general living conditions in Mexico, and how one went about getting settled somewhere, preferably in a smaller town, for a stay that might extend over several months. The conversation was carried out mainly by the two ladies.

"Tell me, May darling," said Mrs. Shaeffer, "did you and Charles rent a house or take an apartment or live in a hotel?"

"A house, of course, darling," replied Mrs. Palmer. "That's the only way to live in the pueblos in Mexico. Of course, food is a problem. You see, most of it is shipped from Mexico City in camiones, and the camiones are always breaking down."

"What are camiones?" asked Mr. Shaeffer.

"Camiones in Spanish means trucks," replied Mrs. Palmer.

"Oh," said Mr. Shaeffer.

"But much worse than the food problem is the servant problem," continued Mrs. Palmer. "The servants in Mexico are simply impossible. You see they speak only Spanish. Not a word of English, or even French. It makes things very difficult."

Mr. Shaeffer caught Mrs. Shaeffer's eye for an instant. "Tell May about Jason, darling."

"Jason—Jason who?" asked Mrs. Palmer.

"Jason is a servant that we've had for the last six months," replied Mrs. Shaeffer. "Both Arthur and I have grown very fond of him. He is a good cook and very tidy about the house."

"Whatever happened to George Washington or Thomas Jefferson or whatever it was?" asked Mrs. Palmer.

"Got a job in the movies," replied Mr. Shaeffer. "Bit parts. Makes lots of money, he tells me."

"Is Jason a nigger, too?" asked Mr. Palmer.

"Jason is half Scotch, half Filipino," Mrs. Shaeffer continued firmly. "After George Washington got into the movies I did my own work until one morning Jason arrived at the back door and asked for work. I didn't have anything in particular for him to do, but I let him clean out the garage and beat a few carpets. By lunch time he had told me all about himself: how he had been a first engineer and then a chef on several ocean liners, and all the countries he had visited, including Russia, and then I let him prepare lunch. It was a very good lunch, so I decided to employ him permanently. I've never regretted it."

"How nice," said Mrs. Palmer.

"I think you've forgotten the whole point, darling," said Mr. Shaeffer evenly.

"What point, darling?"

"About Jason speaking fluent Spanish."

"Oh, yes, so I did." Mrs. Shaeffer smiled at Mrs. Palmer. "Jason, being half Filipino, speaks fluent Spanish, so Arthur and I thought it would be a wonderful idea to take him to Mexico with us, because we don't speak a word of Spanish ourselves."

"By all means take him along, then," said Mrs. Palmer.

"But there're all kinds of servants in Mexico," objected Mr. Palmer. "Besides, isn't it rather expensive to take an extra person along?"

"Nonsense, Charles, it can't cost more than fifty dollars, and what's fifty dollars compared to diseases like amoebic dysentery? Besides there are not all kinds of servants in Mexico, I assure you."

"I'd like to bet—"

"Charles Palmer, stop it. Stop it this instant . . ."

The Shaeffers got up with one impulse and took

their leave.

\* \* \*

Mr. and Mrs. Shaeffer drove to Mexico accompanied by Jason. For the first few hundred miles Jason rode in the rumble seat. After that he complained of sunburn, so Mr. Shaeffer changed seats with him while Mrs. Shaeffer drove. In Phoenix, Arizona, where they stopped for the night, Jason suffered a severe attack of indigestion which lasted three days. Mr. Shaeffer ran back and forth for the doctor while Mrs. Shaeffer played nurse. It was a trying experience for all of them, especially the Shaeffers, as the thermometer in that city hovered around 105 degrees. At Nuevo Laredo, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, Jason began to take charge of everything. Mr. and Mrs. Shaeffer were delighted with Jason's Spanish. Now they could relax, and relax they did. Jason looked after them as though they were a couple of children. He ordered their meals, chose their rooms, saw to it that the car was properly oiled, greased, and gassed. How very glad they were that they had brought Jason!

They drove straight to Mexico City, intending to stop there for a few days. Jason disappeared the first day and didn't turn up again until three days later. He looked very pale and pinched. He claimed he had had another attack of indigestion, but Mr. Shaeffer had suffered too many hangovers not to recognize the symptoms. He informed his wife of his suspicions, but she was incredulous. She had never known Jason to drink to excess and God knows he had had marvelous opportunities in their home in Hollywood. Mr. Shaeffer finally gave up the argument though he had seen Jason drunk on not less than seven occasions.

From Mexico City they motored to Cuernavaca and fell in love with it. Immediately Mr. and Mrs. Shaeffer decided to rent a house there for at least three months. Jason then scouted around and spotted all the rentable houses. Mr. and Mrs. Shaeffer looked at all of them and chose one high up on a mountainside, a beautiful little house with a studio attached where Jason could stay. They left all the business details to Jason and were delighted when he informed them that the rent for the whole house and studio was only two hundred American dollars including servants.

"Of course we won't need the servants," said Mr. Shaeffer.

"The servants come with the house, Mr. Shaeffer," said Jason. "It seems to be a custom in Mexico. You can't rent a house without servants."

"And how many servants are there?" asked Mr. Shaeffer.

"A married couple and their daughter is all," replied Jason casually.

"Three servants—good God," groaned Mr. Shaeffer, a trifle alarmed. "That's two more than we ever had before. I don't like the idea. It smacks of feudalism."

"Now, Arthur darling," broke in Mrs. Shaeffer, "it's perfectly all right to write about social problems, but let's not, for heaven's sake, take them too seriously in Mexico. If it's a custom here, let's accept it gracefully and not yank it out by the roots."

"Very well, darling, it's bad, it's very bad—it's bad sociologically, psychologically, and every other way. Every revolt, every rebellion, every major revolution from ancient to modern times, has been caused by exactly such stupid social inequalities."

"Very well, darling, it's bad, it's very bad. Now,

which would you prefer, to stay on in this smelly old, barn of a hotel with the rest of these leprous tourists or to take the house with the servants?"

"The house, of course, darling. I only think it's best to look on the worst side of things first."

"Then is everything settled?" said Jason impatiently. "I have to pay the landlord. That will be four hundred dollars. Two hundred each for the first and last months."

"Is that also customary?" said Mr. Shaeffer coldly, drawing out his travelers' checks.

"According to Señor Don Arturo Jimenez it is," replied Jason imperiously.

"And who is Señor Don Arturo whatever his name is?"

"Our landlord," replied Jason, an enigmatic smile on his face.

Mr. Shaeffer signed the travelers' checks in silence and handed them to Jason. When Jason had left the hotel he turned to his wife.

"It has just occurred to me, Doris, that Jason is no longer a servant."

Mr. Shaeffer looked surprised. "Yes, darling, you're right. Jason isn't a servant any longer. He's turned into a sort of secretary, hasn't he?"

"Secretary—hell. He's fast turning into God Almighty!" said Mr. Shaeffer and mumbled other things to himself.

\* \* \*

The first month in their new home was very agreeable. Mr. Shaeffer was hard at work on his long-planned play, and Mrs. Shaeffer painted two water colors. Jason occupied himself with the servants, took daily sun baths, and spent the evenings with a small group of Mexican friends whom he had met in various cantinas. He appeared to be very happy in his new role of major-domo. The Mexican servants adored the very ground he walked on, and, of course, looked upon him as their rightful patron while Mr. and Mrs. Shaeffer were treated with polite indifference. Deep down in their hearts the servants disliked them, for they felt that they were a great burden to Jason.

The next month was not quite so agreeable. Jason had become a veritable Caliph. He seldom arose before noon. His breakfast was served in bed, and his afternoons were spent in receiving Mexican friends of both sexes in his studio. The nights were passed either in cantinas or with amigas, depending on his mood. Mr. and Mrs. Shaeffer themselves spending a great deal of time discussing ways and means of shipping Jason back to Los Angeles.

"If we don't send him back soon," Mrs. Shaeffer would say, "he'll never be able to do anything again. He'll be dependent on us for the rest of his life."

"But we can't send him back without a reason," said Mr. Shaeffer, who hadn't his wife's faculty for closing his conscience.

"Reason!" cried Mrs. Shaeffer, "reason! My God, Arthur, the man's simply tramping all over us. We brought him to Mexico as our servant not as our mentor."

"That's our fault, not Jason's. But I have a hunch he will give us reason," said Mr. Shaeffer at last.

And Jason did.

One night, just as the Shaeffer were preparing for bed, there came a knock at the front door. It was an insistent knock and carried a note of severity. After a brief debate it was decided that Mr. Shaeffer should see who was knocking. He finally switched on the porch light, opened the door, and was confronted by a short but stocky Mexican in military uniform. The

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Oil.

By Luis Alberto Acuña.

## Planning a National Economy

By Tomme Clark Cell

HISTORY records no opportunity in Mexico for the kind of leisurely, well-balanced economic growth that resulted in the United States' mighty capitalistic system, which is the product of the long-range operation of free-enterprise incentives under a stable democratic order. It is idle to suggest what might have been, or to argue that Mexico now should abandon direct governmental intervention to seek readjustment through the natural forces of a free, or even relatively free, economy. It is too late. The people would not tolerate the hardships of such a readjustment; even the suggestion would be political suicide. Furthermore, Mexico's present economic status has no margin for error that would permit such a readjustment without risking intolerable hardships.

Time, it is hoped, may bring development strength permitting freer enterprise with a greater degree of economic democracy. Meanwhile, planning and direction of the national economy appears inescapable, however distasteful that conclusion may be to proponents of private enterprise, of whom the author is one. The eggs cannot be unscrambled at this late date, but certainly the omelet can be improved. Granted the necessity for central planning of the national economy, it is the duty of the Mexican government to its people to follow the sound advice of the Inter-American Social and Economic Council:

"The failure of private enterprise to develop an integrated system, aimed at the full exploitation of existing natural resources for the sake of the potenti-

ally important domestic markets, indicates the need for government planning and intervention... planning in Latin America must be directed towards the promotion of economic growth, while the methods must be such that this end may be attained with a minimum of social and economic regimentation."

That is a tall order, admittedly. And, Mexico, though it ranks high in Latin America in attention to the problem, so far has failed to form a comprehensive plan for economic development, or to follow through in an orderly fashion such planning as it has done.

Since Cárdenas' initial effort to materialize the aims of the Revolution, each Mexican President has worked under a 'Six Year Plan' for national progress. Those generalized plans, however, have been little more than political platforms, expressions of hope and intent but not detailed action programs. Nor has Mexico yet developed a genuine, centralized planning agency, notwithstanding official lip-service to that ideal.

The Mexican-American Commission for Economic Cooperation gave Mexico its first taste of expert general analysis of its economic problems and proposed a general action program to meet them. That emergency commission's recommendation for a permanent successor resulted in the establishment in 1944 of the Federal Commission for Industrial Development, both a planning and functioning agency. The high hopes for that commission, however, were unfulfilled.

Planning responsibilities are now scattered inefficiently among loosely co-ordinated agencies. Su-

pervised by the Ministry of Finance and headed by the Bank of Mexico, the national banks engage in planning activities and carry out the plans through credit policies. These are the Banco Nacional de Credito Agricola (agriculture credit), Banco Nacional de Credito Ejidal (ejido credit), Banco de Fomento Cooperativo (co-operative development), Banco Nacional Hipotecario y de Obras Publicas (mortgages and public works), Banco de Comercio Exterior (foreign commerce), and Nacional Financiera. The latter—something like the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in the United States—is to sponsor essential industrial development neglected by private capital, encourage desirable private developments, create and support the stock and bond markets, and act as the government's financial agent in both foreign and domestic operations. It is also supposed to promote technical advances and higher productivity, help balance the foreign trade budget, promote agricultural mechanization, and do all those things without generating inflation or unduly burdening future generations. This agency undoubtedly gives more central direction to economic development than any other.

The Ministry of National Economy also has cabinet-rank planning responsibilities. In addition, economic development in specialized fields is planned and promoted by the Federal Electricity Commission, Mining Development Commission, the Papaloapan and Tepalatepec Commissions, and the Ministry of Water Resources, formerly the National Irrigation Commission. These specialized agencies have worked out intelligent, long-range plans and are energetically carrying them out, but unfortunately without proper co-ordination with one another and other phases of economic development. The President, through his Cabinet, is supposed to co-ordinate the whole program to fit the Six Year Plan, but that is a responsibility which that heavily burdened official cannot meet adequately, even if his program could be reduced to a workable master plan. In addition, the state government, the Federal District, and even municipal governments pursue planning functions only haphazardly related to the national program, or to what various interpreters assume the national program to be.

The Mexican government needs to centralize and co-ordinate the planning function. The first task of that authority would be to take a detailed, comprehensive inventory of natural resources and other economic assets. Then it should draw up a master plan of national economic development which would establish a system of priorities for all phases of that development, keeping the whole within the capacity of resources and respecting the needs of consumers, business and industry, agriculture, government, and foreign exchange. In short, it should set up an economic development and natural resources budget—modeled perhaps on Scandinavian experience—and that budget should be sternly balanced for maximum economic growth with minimum dislocations of price, income distribution, and related equilibria. The developmental budget would have to be flexible to permit speeding and slowing the rate of progress as dictated by the pressures of international affairs. This poses an appalling task—and the government should call in as much expert assistance from older industrial cultures as it can get to help—but it is a task that must be done in order to prevent the crushing imbalances that threaten inflation or depression at the slightest fluctuation forces.

The first essential to such planning and direction of the national economy is to build a national system of statistical reporting covering all fields, including generally improved decennial and special five-year

censuses compiled and published in time to be of maximum use. Without a steady full flow of fresh data, planning will continue to embrace too much guess-work, and direction will continue to involve wild scrambles to patch mistakes and to retreat from blind alleys. Consider the absurdity of attempting to render decisions molding a nation's destiny without the facts and figures for a completely clear picture of today's conditions and tomorrow's probabilities.

Sound national planning would require specific reforms of governmental policy suggested in the various other sections of this report. Such reforms may be considered politically infeasible, but it is not apparent how Mexico can hope to muddle through to satisfactory living standards and permanent political stability without undertaking the policy revisions indicated. The Aleman administration succeeded in riding out the winds of expediency without capsizing the ship of state, but its successor must come to grips with the basic national problems or risk a popular reaction that could gravely endanger the worthier aims of the Revolution. Runaway inflation, a deflationary 'bust,' or an accumulation of errors in development policy that would result in an irreparable agricultural-industrial imbalance, any one of these consequences of poor planning surely would create more political opposition than the suggested overhauling of the government.

First, the Mexican government should thoroughly re-survey and reform its tax structure from top to bottom. States and municipalities should have more revenue for decentralized administration. The tax structure should be more flexible to counter economic fluctuations, and it should produce more revenue for the tasks ahead. Industry, favored in its infant development, should soon begin to pay more of its own way. Individual justice and economic effect should be the double standard by which to measure each levy and its rate.

Second, the government should critically study the tariff structure that is now being built, revise it continuously to conform with the long-run aims of economic growth and future trade, and balance its favors and penalties fairly over all elements of the national life. The interests of the farmer and the consumer should be weighed as heavily as those of the industrialist and the businessman.

Third, the government should question seriously all phases of current capitalization of Mexican Industrialization, for fuller understanding of the cost of present methods to this and later generations. Not all capital is good capital, and the proper amount is not necessarily as much as can be garnered at whatever interest rates may prevail. Direct and indirect deficit-financing should be strictly avoided, and pay-as-you-go public works and industrial investment of private savings should be stressed consistently.

Fourth, goals for social progress in health, education, and the like should be closely geared to the nation's economic program, with rate and scope cut to fit available resources. The standards which eventually must be met are clear enough to all, but what Mexico can do today, tomorrow, next year, and the next five or ten years should be determined and so scheduled. Grandiose projects unrelated to reality have produced unnecessary confusion and frustration, postponing the day when they possibly can be materialized. It is doubtful that Mexico can enjoy the social standards of today's highly industrialized nations—which did not enjoy such standards during their formative years—while it is striving to achieve the capital formation essential to a modern industrial structure.

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Drawing.

## Don Fidencio

By Dane Chandos

WENT out in the late afternoon and strolled along the beach. It was a day of white, dry sunlight, and the loop of an incoming seine net had caught some water hyacinths in a sharply outlined arabesque, lettuce green against the whitish mirror of the lake. The bodies of the Indio fishermen glowed—hot copper with fire reflected in it—against the green. One of them plunged his arms into the hyacinths and threw great armfuls out over the net, over the bobbing twinkling floats, armfuls of green into the glassy air. Venustiano, completely recovered now, was sitting in the dappled shade of a willow tree watching his two cows, his horse, and the big black ram drinking together at the water's edge.

"My ram's been sick, too," he said, "but he got well in four days, without making a vow."

A little way off, Venustiano's nephew Chui and the sharecropper, the man who worked for half the produce of the land he helped to cultivate, were winnowing corn in the soft evening breeze. They had spread out a big petate, and they had a tall basket beside it full of the corn to be winnowed. From the big basket, Chui filled two smaller flat ones, exchanging the full for the empty with the sharecropper with the precision of a man tossing bricks. The sharecropper heaved the full basket high above his head and tilted it, pouring out the corn. Hoisting the full basket was not at all a light job. As it tilted, the grain fell heavily onto the mat and the evening wind obligingly blew away the light chaff. The two young men worked on a steady swinging rhythm that lent their work the quality of a dance. The whole scene was charmingly

colored: their wide yellowish hats, floppy white pajamas; the coppery skins and the chaff's light brown, the grain's honey yellow and the rush mat's silvery green standing clear against the pale blue and white of the lake. Like most Indians at work, they were graceful. Nothing was done for the look of the thing; everything was strictly functional, even to the flick of scarlet given to the scene by the handkerchief Chui had tied over his mouth to keep out the flying chaff. Nobody thought of the winnowing as beautiful, and nobody on the shore looked at the two men at work, except the pretty daughter of Don Fidencio, and she was looking at Chui. She had lingered behind her father, who was taking his evening stroll to the end of the jetty.

Venustiano looked reflectively at the short stumpy figure of Don Fidencio.

"He has often borrowed money from me," said Venustiano. "In fact, he still borrows money from me. Yet he is by much the richest man in the village. Richer than that César, oh, yes."

"Then why does he want to borrow money?"

"Pues, he is afraid of the bandits."

Venustiano brushed a small scrap of blown chaff off the black, broken nails that stuck out of his toeless huaraches, and went on:

"Many years ago, pues, his aunt's husband, old Don Agripín, who lived over in Ixtlahuacán, was taken one night with his son Emigdio by the bandits. They took him to the mountains and sent a message to Doña Cruz, Don Agripín's wife and Don Fidencio's aunt, asking for five thousand pesos ransom. Now old Don Agripín had money, but he didn't want to part with it. He had foreseen that one day he might be taken by the bandits, and he had told his wife that if that happened she was to give half the ransom asked. He was a great bargainer. So Doña Cruz paid two thousand five hundred pesos to the man sent by the bandits and waited. The man came back the next day and demanded another two thousand five hundred. Doña Cruz was a dutiful woman, and, after thinking it over, she gave the man another one thousand two hundred and fifty pesos. That seemed

to be obeying her husband's instructions. She said that was quite enough and she wouldn't give any more, and the man, after some argument, went away and Doña Cruz waited. She waited for nearly a year, pues, and then they found Don Agripín and young Emigdio up in the mountains. They had been tied to trees with wire and left there, and when they were found, their bones were as bare as a peeled branch."

Venustiano paused to light a cigarette while two women in profound, black-stockinged mourning walked by with wash baskets on their heads. One basketful was wrapped in brooding blue, the other in burning lilac.

"So of course Don Fidencio is nervous. He was his Uncle Agripín's heir, and he still owns the property out at Ixtlahuacán as well as his land here. But I think he pays money to the government not to have his taxes raised. He must have quite eighty thousand pesos in silver as well as his property, but I don't know where he keeps it. He does not like to be thought rich. Even when his elder daughter married, he did not have much of a feast, so I don't know what good his money does him. Of course bandits aren't what they used to be. But still, some bandits did once come and, take Don Fidencio to the mountains. They came about seven, just when the light was going—you know, they always come then, so as not to be recognized—and they came galloping into the village firing their guns. But that was many years ago, pues, and by nine o'clock he was back at his house with two of the bandits to whom he paid four thousand pesos in silver then and there. That was not very much for him. They might have asked much more."

Venustiano blew some more chaff off his hand onto his white pajamas and clucked to one of his cows who had strayed down the shore.

"It was soon after that that he came to borrow off me for the first time. And ever since, two or three times a year, he comes along to my house, bringing a few peons with him. He falls on his knees, and sometimes he weeps, and he cries, 'Don Venustiano,'

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## Violin Concerto

By Elias Lieberman

**T**HE violin is my philosopher:

He proves in dialectic of pure tone  
That love is bitter-fragrant drops of myrrh,  
That memories are all we really own,  
That in a given moment life may seem  
A pit of pain, of bottomless torment,  
And in another a revealing dream  
Of joy and paradisal beauty blent.

Thus hidden in a brief adagio  
There is a sermon on the transient hour;  
And lured from inner depths by sweep of bow  
May be a vision of the perfect flower,  
Immortal blossom of divine intent  
Whose humblest seed explains the firmament.



Water Color.

By George "Pop" Hart.

## Aftosa Side-lights in Mexico

By Beverley E. Brink

**T**HE jeep bounced to a halt between the coconut groves and a tall blond veterinarian, Dr. William W. Brown, Jr., unfolded himself from behind the wheel. He spoke in rapid Spanish to one of the employees manning the aftosa disinfection station. Meanwhile, the other sprayed the jeep with "sosa" (soda ash solution).

This is one of the 82 disinfection stations on the military cordon circling the infected zone in the state of Veracruz, Mexico.

In cooperation with Mexican veterinary personnel, Dr. Brown, American District Supervisor, with a handful of U.S. veterinarians have been working since May 23, 1953 to stem this last outbreak of aftosa (foot-and-mouth disease). Under the eight U.S. veterinarians and an equal number of their Mexican counterparts, are 41 "A" and "C" inspectors and six quarantine and disinfection (Q & D) men. Each of these has a Mexican counterpart. Joint Aftosa Commission personnel staff the disinfection stations, offices, and mechanical shops.

One of the biggest problems facing these veterinarians is that of controlling movement of animals and people. Boundaries of the quarantine zone have been moved several times since the last time in September when "we had to modify the zone to catch some traffic that was moving around us."

Areas vary in the comforts of living from the Tecomula area of Dr. Perry M. Boyd, Jr. with its resort hotels and brimming gulf surf, to the tangled isolation farther southwest. For two Mexican doctors stationed in this latter area, their power wagon (a heavy-

duty pickup with a winch and four-wheel drive) serves as office, living quarters, and transportation.

Driving into Gutierrez Zamora for an infrequent look at civilization, they laughed about their plight—"No tengo telefono, no tengo muchachas, no tengo gasolina; caminos muy malos." (Trans: no telephone, girls, gasoline, or good roads.) As Dr. Brown says, "Before I go back to the States I want to tour Mexico so I can talk like I've been here."

He, like other U.S. veterinarians working on aftosa, spends his time in places where tourists never go. During the first hoof and mouth program he was often out for a month at a time with horse and pack animal in isolated regions of Oaxaca.

Dr. Brown, who speaks with a western drawl, was the first U.S. veterinarian on the scene of the present outbreak.

"I was due to return to the States on Wednesday. On Friday a rancher reported a case in Veracruz."

Stationed at the time in main Mexico City offices of the "Comision Prevencion Aftosa," Dr. Brown was sent immediately to the spot. His familiarity with the work of the Commission and with the Veracruz area assisted in working out a program in some ways more arduous than the first full-scale program.

"Sometimes the Mexicans resent your going into their potreros (pastures) until you explain you won't hurt their stock," Dr. Brown said.

Bud Fisher, a U.S. Q & D man who has ranched himself for fifteen years in Mexico, knows from personal experience how rough aftosa has been on Mexican

cattlemen. With closing of the border to U.S. export, Fisher went to work for the Commission as an appraiser. In September, 1952 he returned to cattle raising, when the border was reopened only to be closed again nine months later.

Aside from problems like mouthing the enormous, hump-necked Zebu (Brahma) cattle and fighting the ticks, mud, and heat, U.S. veterinarians must continually keep an eye on the personnel under their charge. Their job is chiefly an organizational one, varied by inspection of occasional suspicious cases (Operation Centrals).

The cattle in Veracruz are primarily a mixture of Swiss and Brahma—Brown Swiss for big bone structure; Brahma for their ability to withstand heat, mud, and insects. All carry a swaggering set of horns.

"It's a disgrace to dehorn," laughs Dr. Brown.

Daily inspection is made of all cloven-hoofed animals in the zone. This varies between 15,000 and 240,000, with a daily average of 96,000 animals inspected. This figure fluctuates according to the weather.

Along the Veracruz gulf coast, summer brings a humid heat which is extremely hard for a man used to a temperate climate. During the fall rainy season, roads normally just passable by jeep become bottomless mires. When a "norther" goes up the coast, the one-blanket bedroll provides little warmth for a man who has frozen all day in tropical clothing.

Seed ticks, which ball up on grass tips, are another routine discomfort. When a man brushes against them in riding by, they spray spontaneously in every direction, showing up twenty-four hours later in tiny itching spots. One U.S. inspector showed me the results in ugly red patches—scars three years old—covering his calves from ankle to knee.

Added to personal discomforts is the technical problem of diagnosing aftosa. Aftosa is indistinguishable, except by serological tests, from vesicular stomatitis. Both Indiana and New Jersey types of stomatitis must be eliminated before a case can be called positive aftosa.

Some conditions often reported as suspicious of aftosa include tarantula bites, mechanical obstruction, and sores on the hooves caused by standing in mud. Daily inspections are supervised by U.S. and Mexican "C" inspector. Suspicious cases are reported to the area supervisors (veterinarians) who make a personal inspection.

Serapings are taken of epithelium tissue from the mouth or foot when the veterinarians have ruled out other causes for the suspicious condition. These samples are sent in sealed thermos jars to Palo Alto, an aftosa laboratory built near Mexico City during the first outbreak.

Suspicious aftosa signs include slobbering, old scars, rings and scars on hooves, as well as more obvious advanced hoof and mouth lesions. Daily inspections are made by experienced livestock men who recognize these symptoms from horseback.

Dr. Boyd, who felt he was getting "soft in the hole" after a successful five-year small animal practice at Miami, Fla., went to Mexico on vacation. He liked Mexico and hence sold his practice last July, got a job with the Commission, had a butch haircut, and set out for Veracruz.

A typical "Operation Central" for Dr. Boyd is a jeep ride to the Tecolutla river dock at Gutierrez Zamora. There, his Mexican counterpart contracts a flat-bottomed motor boat with its invariable tin roof in anticipation of the rainy season.

Chugging around the islands and unseen sandbars, the boatmen finally locate the suspected ranch (or finca or quinta). Before leaving the boat both veterinarians pull on white coveralls and change boots.

On shore, they disinfect their boots and rinse their hands in sosa.

Disinfection before going on a rancher's premises is a precaution against bringing the virus in with them. Again before leaving, they will disinfect both hands and feet. The coveralls will be removed and washed in sosa before being used again.

Before leaving the quarantine zone, all unwashed clothing is saturated in formalin gas released by a solution of formaldehyde and potassium permanganate. This is done at Papantla, Dr. Brown's field headquarters. Vehicles leaving the zone are sprayed with sosa; the people must walk across a mat soaked in sosa.

A canning and rendering plant is now under construction for the purpose of relieving the pressure of quarantined cattle ready for market. The meat will be rendered or canned for shipment from the area.

The problem of movement of cattle, even with continual disinfecting, is an absorbing one for the veterinarians. A Mexican ranch custom allows lead steers, big Zebu often twelve years old, to familiarize themselves with road traffic by running in the roadways. At the mouth of the Tecolutla river are many islands which provide good grazing; these island cattle must be prevented from swimming to either mainland.

Ingenuity has helped U.S. veterinarians cope with both personal and professional problems in this low, hot coastal area. Electricity in some instances is scarce and a candle stuck in an empty bottle often provides the only illumination. Lack of refrigeration in remote areas means adopting eating habits of the region. Jerky, canned fish, chile, beans, tortillas, and bottled drinks are staple foods in such areas.

Probing the mouth of a hairless, gray Mexican hog requires dexterity; this problem is solved by a nose ring constructed on the spot of rope, a piece of pipe, and a stick. The Zebu, which "can kick a chaw of tobacco from a man's mouth," have earned the respect of U.S. workers. Avoiding their heavy jaw molars with a slippery rubber glove on is as tricky as avoiding their hooves and horns.

Jogging in a jeep across the African-like landscape of coastal Veracruz is apparently mentally stimulating. One of Dr. Brown's idiosyncrasies is to come to a sudden halt and pull out his notebook. Or he will say abruptly to his companion, "Grab the wheel—I just thought of something." Dr. Brown claims he does his best thinking in a jeep.

This is underlined by Dr. Boyd, who says, "I get behind the wheel and start planning; that's when you start remembering little details."

Rugged mountain roads dropping off into vast chasms require a fleet of vehicles able to withstand the pressure. Dodge power wagons are maintained for heavy duty work; they are equipped with winches for pulling themselves and other vehicles out of mud. Stock trucks, jeeps, and bulldozers are also maintained by the Commission.

"Be careful; we lost a power wagon over the mountain today," is Dr. Brown's cheery adiós to an inspector beginning the hazardous five-hour drive to Mexico City for a weekend with his family.

"This is a young man's job," points out Dr. Brown.

Seeing the arduous daily routine of these field veterinarians, this statement is sacrosanct. All are in their 30's; most are not career B.A.I. men, but signed up only for work in Mexico.

On the highest administrative level is U.S. director Walter Thurston, former U.S. ambassador to Mexico, and his Mexican Co-director Dr. Lauro Ortega, who is also Sub-Secretary of Agriculture in Mexico.



## Tepexpan Man

By Phyllis Benson

In the laboratories of the Department of Physical Anthropology of the Mexican Museo Nacional all nicely laid out on white cotton are a black calcified skull and several miscellaneous bones. They were discovered some years ago a few feet beneath the surface in the vicinity of the little town of Tepexpan, a few miles outside Mexico City. The geologists, calculating from the age of the layer of clay in which they lay, state that they have an age of seven thousand years.

Now, while this is by no means the oldest discovery of a human being's remains found in the Americas (finds have been made in lake beds in Brazil, Florida and Minnesota), still it is important, and it is the culmination of a long search by the scientists, who have been desiring for some time to find a specimen of the people who inhabited the high central valley of Mexico five thousand years before Christ. They knew that people lived in the region at that time, for in the same upper Pleistocene formation in which the remains of this man were found, several artefacts—implements of obsidian and bone—had been found, as well as elephant and mammoth remains.

Three institutions coordinated their efforts to make a thorough investigation of the region. They were the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, the Viking Fund, Inc., and the Instituto de Geología de la Universidad. Under their auspices systematic investigations were carried on by geological engineer A. R. V. Arellano, Helmut de Terra, and Dr. Hans Lundberg of Toronto.

\* \* \*

Location of the site was determined by a preliminary geophysical study all about the region of Tepexpan. Thousands of square feet were examined with an electrical apparatus, capable of determining whether there were any bulky masses beneath the surface. Three times they excavated before they succeeded in uncovering the fossilized skeletal remains of a man. The remains were found in a layer of straw colored clay at 1.12 meters depth. A fragment, too, of arrowhead, classified as being of the Folsom culture type (with a groove) was found nearby. It is of grey colored chalcedony.

The arrowhead is only one of the possible clues as to how the earliest known inhabitant of the region of Mexico met his death: probably while hunting. Judging from the abundance of elephants discovered in the area, it is a logical deduction that man of that time hunted elephants, perhaps for domestication, certainly for ivory. At any rate, less than one thousand feet from the man's remains were the remains of an imperial elephant, and all about in an area of one kilometer by three were found skeletons of many mammals.

We know, too, that at that time nearly the entire valley was covered by the great lake which the Aztecs called Texcoco. And around the lake were great thick forests, a perfect environment for a hunter people.

But be the circumstances of his death what they may, the important thing is that his skeletal remains were so well preserved—hermetically sealed, much in the manner of the specimens in the La Brea Tar Pits in California—that they have come down to us.

A very great deal cannot be ascertained from just one specimen as to what man of that time was like, but the reports of the anthropologists, especially Dr. Javier Romero, who has made the most detailed study, contain some interesting facts.

They classify him as *Homo Sapiens* and judge his age at the time of his death to have been about thirty-five. They declare that he met death by accident and was not interred because the body was found face downward, doubled up in a knee-chest position. As the bones of the back and legs are missing, one might be led to suppose it likely that animals devoured these; whereas the bones which were preserved were probably submerged in the mud and so escaped destruction.

One of the bones of the forearm shows a distinct fracture, which, however, was well mended. His teeth are bad. The molars are missing and there is evidence of his having had bad abscesses. And the incisors, no doubt in compensation, are greatly worn down. He probably suffered from malnutrition.

The skull is a mesocephalic type, normal and well formed, denoting good muscular development.

But the most important thing is that he resembles modern man very closely. The species hasn't changed much in seven thousand years in Mexico.



Landscape, Oil.

By Carlos Orozco Romero.

(Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art )

## The Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art

By Guillermo Rivas

THE Exposition of Mexican Art which is open to the public at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, embracing all its periods and aspects and filling every foot of available space in this ornate marble palace, is without any doubt the most representative and comprehensive projection of its kind ever achieved in our midst. Here the visitor may behold the panorama of Mexican art from its earliest pre-Conquest phases, through the centuries of the Hispano-Mexican era and the Nineteenth century to our own day. The scope of this great exposition, covering four thousand years, implicitly extends beyond the field of art to that of archaeology, anthropology and history. It indeed presents in the terms of art a kaleidoscope of the country's life itself from its remotest beginnings.

This exposition represents much more than a monumental spectacle, more than a superb attraction for residents and visitors. In its final essence it reveals the soul of a people. It enables the student of Mexican reality, particularly the student from abroad, to perceive the unique aesthetic heritage of a nation, the rich and endlessly varied expression of an urge to achieve beauty amid an existence that has been often beset by tragic trial.

Although the structure of the Palacio de Bellas Artes had not been originally planned for this purpose, its various floors through both wings have been quite successfully adapted in such way that the spectator can follow Mexico's creative evolution step by step.

Thus beginning in the left wing of the ground floor he beholds rare examples of pre-Conquest art—monumental sculpture and mural paintings, with reproductions of most important works from all the principal archaeological regions of the country. The right wing of this floor presents a splendid collection of Colonial art, painting and sculpture of the 16th., 17th. and 18th. centuries, consisting mainly of such works which evince the fusion of native and Spanish influence.

On the second floor, a special section has been assigned to the display of 19th. century art, with examples of retablos and portraits by anonymous painters and the works of such renowned masters as José María Estrada, José Justo Montiel, Juan Cordero, Santiago Rebull and José María Velasco. The rest of the space on this floor is assigned to popular arts and handicrafts, from the earliest to present-day forms, including specimens of pottery, painting, sculpture, furniture, basketry, silver, copper and iron ware, toys, masks and other ritualistic artifacts.

Contemporary art—easel and mural painting, sculpture and architecture—is exhibited on the third floor, while a special section on the fourth floor is assigned to prints. The work of every contemporary Mexican painter, sculptor or engraver of note is included in this department. Twelve ample salons comprise this exhibit. All the styles and tendencies of our modern expression are revealed in this triumphant summary, in this demonstration of an artistic rebirth which gave Mexico a place of veritable eminence in the world of art.



EXECUTION. Oil.

By José Clemente Orozco.  
(Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art)



CITY OF MEXICO. Tempera.

By Juan O'Gorman.  
(Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art)



TORTILLA MAKER. Oil.

By Diego Rivera.  
(Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art)



THE TWO FRIDAS. Oil.  
(Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art)

By Frida Kahlo.



HOWLING DOG. Oil.  
(Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art)

By Rufino Tamayo.



NUDE CHILD. Oil.  
(Bellas Artes Exposition of Mexican Art)

By Juan Soriano.

# Un Poco de Todo

## ANNIVERSARY OF A PURCHASE

**W**HEN the ebullient Southern gentleman who had just negotiated the purchase of 19,142,400 acres of Mexican land for the United States Government—a territory whose acquisition was to bear his name—landed in New Orleans and was asked by a customs official to declare his belongings, he simply stated, "Sir, I am General Gadsden. There is nothing in my trunk but my treaty." The General's treaty, which was signed one hundred years ago, on Dec. 30, 1853, was to establish the international borders where they have remained ever since. This was also to be the South's final bid for economic hegemony and was to begin the direct series of events that led, in seven years, to secession and civil war.

The contents of the American diplomat's trunk also caused considerable difficulty for the Government of the irrepressible Santa Anna. Fearful of a new war with the United States, and in his usual financial straits, Santa Anna had agreed to sell the territory for ten million dollars. Five years later, in exile, he defended his actions by describing the territory in question as a "piece of wild country" and wrote of an American Senator who reputedly stated that "Mr. Gadsden lost his head" and that the territory was "not worth one-fourth of the stipulated sum." There were, at the time, many Americans who would have considered this a generous assessment. Senator Benton called the region "desolate" and "Godforsaken" and quoted Kit Carson as reporting that a "wolf could not make a living on it."

Under the influence of these and similar charges historians have tended to minimize the significance of the Gadsden Purchase. It has often been dismissed as a "conscience payment" to Mexico for the immense territory wrested from that country by the then recently fought war. However, General Gadsden, an ardent Southern nationalist, had very definite ideas about the purpose of his mission. His early interest in railroads caused him, along with many other Southerners, to fear that if the inevitable transcontinental railroad was built in the North it would mean the hatching of free states along the right of way and, apart from economic consequences, would tip the Senate scales hopelessly against the South.

Mexico, with no desire to remember Mr. Gadsden, has always referred to the agreement as the Treaty of Mesilla, for at the time only the Mesilla Valley possessed any economic value. The valley has since dwindled in relative importance, but it has provided some of the most colorful history in all the Southwest. From the days of the conquistadores the region has been fraught with romance. A legend has persisted for centuries of a great hoard of gold accumulated there by a colony of Indians. Despite substantial proof of the colony's existence and geological evidence of gold in the near-by mountains the whereabouts of the treasure and the mines from which it came have remained a mystery. During the Civil War the Confederacy established a Territory of Arizona, with Mesilla as the seat of government. A three-way war was then waged by the forces of North and South and the ever-belligerent Apaches. For more than two decades following the war the Apaches maintained a reign of terror. Under the brilliant leadership of strategists such as Victorio and Geronimo they turned the country into a no-man's land despite the efforts of the greater part of the American Army. In this turbu-

lent period the valley also became the scene of the murderous career of Billy the Kid.

The territory of the purchase has since been divided between the states of New Mexico and Arizona and has been more peaceful and prosperous than its early days would have seemed to augur. It now contains the second, third and fourth largest cities in Orizoma. One of the greatest irrigation centers in the world is located there and through the region runs America's second most important transcontinental railroad. The railroad—General Gadsden's dream and the reason for which the territory was acquired—was finally finished in 1900. Although at one time a factor in the breaking of the Union, its original purpose was to help bind the U.S. nation together. Now, with the passing of a century it is fulfilling that great purpose.

## THE YEAR'S RECORD IN MEDICINE

Probably the two diseases about which the public hears most are cancer and poliomyelitis. The record of achievement in dealing with both in 1953 was brilliant.

Dr. Ludwig Gross of the Veterans Administration Hospital, Bronx, New York, demonstrated that leukemia is probably caused by a virus. He injected extracts from the leukemic organs of one strain of mice into another which was immune to leukemia. Nevertheless leukemia appeared. In some of the mice of the second strain cancer of the salivary glands also developed. Apparently the first strain carried two cancer inciters.

Dr. Harry Goldblatt made history in cancer research by converting normal cells into cancer cells in test tubes. He simply deprived the cells of oxygen. When transplanted into rats the cells developed into real cancers. This ties in admirably with Dr. Otto Warburg's discovery thirty years ago that malignant cells can live without oxygen.

From the Wellecome Research Laboratories came the discovery that 6-mercaptopurine causes acute leukemia to disappear temporarily. The drug has been tested at the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research. Even if it does not cure, it prolongs life for a short period.

\* \* \*

Dr. Jonas Salk, whose polio vaccine is to be tested on a large scale this year, came out with a new and powerful vaccine said to protect against all types of influenza for two years. Studies have been made on thousands—not considered enough to prove the case. Dr. Salk used his polio-vaccine technique. That is, he whipped up live but feeble influenza virus in a mineral oil and injected the resultant emulsion into a muscle.

A substance vaguely designated as the "clearing factor" dispels the cloudiness that follows in blood after the consumption of a fatty meal. Drs. Christian B. Afinsen, Edwin Boyle, Joseph H. Bragdon and Ray K. Brown, all of the National Heart Institute, made the important discovery that the clearing factor can be synthetically produced in large amounts. This may be of importance in the treatment of arteriosclerosis

Continued on page 48

## Literary Appraisals

**THE SHADOWS OF THE IMAGES.** By William E. Barrett. 540 pp. New York: Doubleday Co.

THE problem of agrarian people of Mexican descent in the southwestern and western parts of the United States is a growing one, and lately has been the subject of several novels. Easily the most powerful one this reviewer has seen on this topic is William E. Barrett's.

This is Mr. Barrett's fourth novel. The difference between him and some other novelists who have used this theme is that Mr. Barrett isn't condescending. He doesn't ooze melodramatic sympathy for the great unwashed and he doesn't cry out against the sort of bondage, or peonage, in which these mañana-loving humans find themselves. He is an artful and subtle storyteller, but he hits hard, presenting the unfortunate minority in all its stark squalor, degeneration and hot-blooded crime.

The story is set in one precinct in a Rocky Mountain city, which could well be Denver. The big growers of sugar beets imported Mexican labor from the border states and from Mexico. The seasonal work was not sufficient for these fast-breeding hordes and they settled in the city for meager existence. Gradually they inch in and practically take over what was once a fashionable residential district. This is Precinct No. 2, an area of hovels, filth, taverns and dark streets on which no woman or girl is safe after dark. To some extent, the Roman Catholic Church dominates the precinct, but it has its troubles.

The author has spun a clever tale, using effectively the technique of pairs of contrasting characters whose lives are bound by ironic twists. There are the Logan brothers, one a police detective and the other a law student and a religious zealot. On the féminé side are Vicki, a hard-working, understanding girl, and Beverly, a spoiled blonde, who extorts big money from her wealthy, divorced parents. Beverly is so warped that she delights in keeping in her apartment a wooden image of a grinning devil (Lucifer) almost solely to disturb Paul Logan, the religious zealot.

The story is concerned mainly with these four, but through the long novel there march in and out the priests, the politicians, the police, the lawyers, big money interests, tavern-keepers, prize-fighters and thugs.

This is not a sordid story; rather it is a very fine story on sordidness. The narrative is packed with little details and seems casual. But it is the sort that grips the reader and holds him. Honestly plotted and vigorously written, "The Shadows of the Images" is a powerful, human novel.

L. N.

**THE MEXICAN STORY.** By May McNeer. With lithographs by Lynd Ward. 96 pp. New York: Ariel Books

In twenty-one brief chapters, featuring for the most part historical or legendary figures, May McNeer presents the vast panorama of Mexican life, past and present. The exotic contrasts of Mexico's geography, the drama and excitement of her tempestuous history, the colorful and the bizarre in her civilization—all are suggested in the events and characters chosen for inclusion. Lynd Ward's handsome four-color lithographs underscore the author's descriptions of a fabulous land and people, showing in rich and brilliant detail fiesta and market place, hero and villain.

Along with Moctezuma, Cortés Father Hidalgo, and Zapata, the portrait gallery includes artists, scientists, and writers. National types—the Indian, the vaquero, the bullfighter—are given places of importance, as are the simple people of farm and village. The sketches, each complete in itself, are loosely strung together in chronological sequence.

A stunningly beautiful book, "The Mexican Story" should stimulate understanding and appreciation of a picturesque land. For older boys and girls whose introduction to Mexico has been through simpler books.

E. H.

**THE RIVERS RAN EAST.** By Leonard Clark. Illustrated. 366 pp. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.

THE complex skein of waterways that make up the Amazon, the fabulous "mother sea" of South America, is the locale of this adventure—the most incredible since Gonzalo Pizarro, in 1540, boiled his saddles and shoes in "certain herbs" and set off for the Kingdom of Gold. Col. Leonard Clark dropped into this vast morass of jungle, snakes and Indians in 1946 to search out some golden-spangled "lost cities" lying somewhere in the unpenetrable upper Amazon. An officer in the O. S. S. during World War II, who personally accepted the unofficial surrender of Formosa from the Japanese, he seems well described as "a rare Victorian type, the trail-breaker: the true explorer whom all others must follow."

Casting aside a banking career, Colonel Clark left San Francisco convinced that those who had concluded that the myth of El Dorado originated in a small frigid tarn in Colombia—where a local chieftain once washed gold dust ceremonially from his body—was historically unsound. Equally wrong, he believed, was the assumption that the Seven Cities of Cibola lay in the U.S. Southwest, where Coronado spent fruitless years. Instead, he held, the seven golden cities lay in the upper Amazon of Peru, in the land of the head-hunters. And so with a thousand dollars "secured by a safety pin" in his shirt pocket and an ancient crumpled parchment map of El Dorado (purchased in Lima for \$100) Clark set out for his Kingdom of Gold.

On the Amazon tributaries things began. The colonel with his Peruvian companion ran into Indian slave traders and became involved in a running gun battle. They escaped in canoes, only to be captured later by "cannibals" and imprisoned in pits surrounded by poison snakes until they shot their way out. They lassoed crocodiles, shot jaguars at short range, lived off boiled snakes, were attacked by sharp-toothed cannibalistic fish and shot at with poisoned arrows. Luck and Colonel Clark's intrepidity were the saving factors.

\* \* \*

Just about the time the explorers escaped the perils of the jungle they ran into a worse peril: a woman. Inez Pokorny had a "close-cropped head with a golden Pan face" and seemed innocent enough until after a series of adventures with the head-hunters the colonel explained to her about his mission and the golden cities. Inez turned out to be an undercover agent for the National Gold Bearing Society of El Dorado, representing London bankers with a concession on all the gold mines that were covered in that "old crumpled parchment" held by Colonel

Clark. After making an agreement and plowing through miles of head-hunters, they found the cities (and the gold), emerged safely and the lady flew away with her share of jungle loot.

Now should one be inclined to feel that the author was pulling the long bow in his narration of all this, we have the word of the American consul, Lewis Gallardy, residing in Iquitos. Like a consular invoicee, his introduction attests to the verity of the package. It may well be, as his publishers state that Leonard Clark "is perhaps the greatest of all twentieth-century explorers," but his book would have been more rewarding if between all these bloodlettings he had paused long enough to give the reader a better understanding of the Amazon and its people.

V. V. H.

**THOSE PERPLEXING ARGENTINES.** By James Bruce. 362 pp. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.

THE author of "Those Perplexing Argentines" was United States Ambassador to Argentina for two years, beginning in August, 1947. James Bruce arrived with "no prejudices," he says, and "under instructions" from President Truman and Secretary of State Marshall to be "as friendly as possible with the Argentines." As if to emphasize these instructions, he declared in his first public speech that Juan Domingo Perón was the "great leader of a great nation." He knew that this would shock and disappoint many people both inside and outside Argentina. But he felt it was in accord with the terms of his assignment.

When Mr. Bruce left Buenos Aires in 1949, he received a decoration from Perón. (He made the fact known himself, quickly, and with enough of a smile to make clear he was taking the award in perspective, and hoped everyone else would.) And as recently as 1951, the tall always genial envoy's autographed picture remained on a table in a corner of Perón's private office.

Thus, to the extent that Mr. Bruce's mission was avowedly an attempt to improve relations with the Argentine people—whose freely chosen leader was Perón—he carried it out to the letter. The policy which had determined that such an attempt should be made turned out to be wrong. By the time Washington decided that the present "correct friendliness" was apter than a forthright cordiality, coupled with economic aid, Mr. Bruce and two successors had come and gone.

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One of them, Stanton Griffis, has already told in a chapter of "Lying in State" some of the intimate details of his diplomatic year in Argentina. Mr. Bruce's book is more biography than autobiography. His subject is Argentina itself. In fact, it is doubtful if any diplomat has ever turned out a more impersonal primer about the country to which he was accredited. Aside from a brief concluding chapter—which includes such unstartling details as that the contents of a diplomatic pouch are inviolate—there are barely half a dozen "I's" in the whole book. Nor is there the vestige of a statesman's secret, or even a memoir, in the usual sense.

On the contrary, Mr. Bruce's portrait of Argentina is amiable, rambling, generally accurate but always along familiar lines, and never compellingly reflective of the personality of either the observer or the observed. He includes the traditional rivalry between Argentina and this country, the natural endowment of the land, the background and attitudes of the people. He touches on the lesser cities, the cafés and the theatres.

He records that Argentines are proud, formal, well-groomed and partial to sports, gambling and big funerals. He says that a great Buenos Aires store has caught the spirit of the capital—"wanting change yet somehow fearing it, anxious for the new yet not willing to relinquish the old." That is just about right. But many people who have lived in both countries are going to blink when they read that the "rude, disinterested sales clerks so frequently found in the United States are rare in Buenos Aires."

Mr. Bruce has not restricted himself to the two years of his mission. He covers the Argentine poli-

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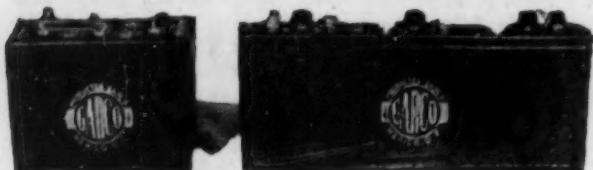
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tical scene beginning roughly with the military revolution of 1943, and running right through the major events which occurred after he left his post: the closing of La Prensa in 1951, the abortive military coup that same September, and the death of Eva Perón in July, 1952. He has thus been forced to rely on secondary sources. These are for the most part honorable enough, and honorably acknowledged. But George I. Blanksten's recent "Perón's Argentina" did a far more exhaustive and definitive job on Peronismo. And "The Woman with the Whip," by María Flores, was a serious, full-length biography of Evita, with which a dozen summary pages by Mr. Bruce can hardly compete.

The unfortunate and puzzling thing is that as United States Ambassador, Mr. Bruce had far more personal contact with the Peróns than any private writer. In conversation, Mr. Bruce is a tireless and effective raconteur—but in his book there is not a single sharp vignette or first hand anecdote about Evita and only one mild one about Perón.

The latter involved the time Mr. Bruce presented his credentials. Chafing at the usual protocol, the Ambassador grinned and said to Perón through an interpreter:

"You and I are both practical fellows. I think you have heard everything in my speech before. So perhaps instead of reading it to your excellency and keeping your cabinet standing, you might like to have me just give it to you so that we will have time to talk about more important things."

Perón, according to Mr. Bruce, smiled and replied: "That's good. Let's go into my private office and talk." The former Ambassador adds. "We did, for more than an hour. We covered a score of issues and established an atmosphere of friendly association and mutual confidence."

That is as far as the author records it.

The specialist reader, therefore, is likely to miss a good deal in the book that Mr. Bruce was certainly in a position to have included. For example, there is only one indirect reference to the Dodero shipping interests—and not a word about the late Alberto Dodero himself, the shrewd, good-hearted, ailing millionaire who was the unofficial but key intermediary between the Ambassador and Perón. Nor does Mr. Bruce mention Henry A. (Bill) Arnold, whom the Ambassador, a successful business man himself, promptly recognized as the American with the best "in" with the Peróns.

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Mr. Bruce might have included the fascinating bit about an attempted reconciliation between the Perón regime and the wealthy Bembergs—which came to nought because of a carelessly written postcard. And he might have played up the split in United States policy which became glaringly apparent when Economic Cooperation Administration consultant H. Struve Hensel came down to proclaim that Argentina would get no E. C. A. dollars—after Mr. Bruce, echoing General Marshall at Bogotá, had been virtually promising it in millions.

The author steadfastly avoids all such inside stuff. And that, of course, is his prerogative.

M. B.

**VELAZQUEZ** With an introduction by José Ortega y Gasset. Illustrated. 79 pp. New York: Random House.

HERE can be nothing but praise for this volume. It is well designed; of a handy size and weight, remarkably cheap, and contains exemplary illustrations, both in color and black-and-white, of the great Spaniard's finest paintings. For once one can agree with the blurb on the jacket. It is indeed a "masterpiece of Swiss book manufacture." Furthermore, it is introduced by a leading contemporary Spanish writer and thinker who not only finds new things to say about this most selfeffacing of great painters but also makes profoundly intelligent observations on art itself.

Nothing is more interesting in the case of a demonstrably great artist than the ups and downs of his posthumous fame. There has been very little wavering in the reverence that Velazquez inspires though, for the reason that most of his paintings were com-



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missioned by Philip IV and kept in royal palaces away from the public eye, it was not until well on in the nineteenth century that the world at large had any opportunity to judge of his superlative qualities. These were immediately recognized and were the goal and despair of such official portraitists as Carolus-Duran and Sargent.

Velazquez' intense humanity as well as his technical powers notably inspired some of the best portraits executed by other painters between 1880 and 1920, but Señor Gasset includes, a bit mournfully, that the peak of his popularity has now passed. However, now that abstract art is on the decline, there is every reason to expect, and to hope, that a new generation will raise him to new heights.

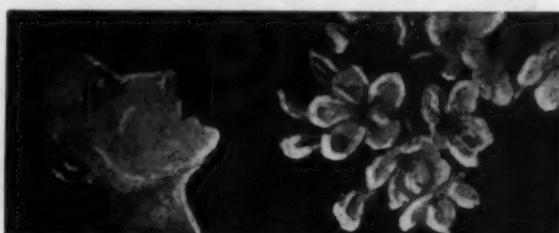
During his lifetime Velazquez encountered no difficulties. At the age of 23 this youth from Seville was appointed painter to the King and for the rest of his life (he died in 1660 immediately after arranging the ceremonies marking the marriage of the Infanta Maria Theresa to Louis XIV) he was intimately, and solely, connected with the court. Even his two sojourns in Italy were made on behalf of his royal master. This mode of existence might have proved galling for another painter but there is no indication that Velazquez found it so nor is there any sign of servility in his royal portraits. We can be grateful to him for our being able to know, through these acute visual documents, so much about the solemn and strange court of the Hapsburgs in Madrid. He is the visual equivalent of a Saint-Simon.

Naturally enough this favored artist had his detractors in the ranks of the envious. He was belittled for only painting portraits, for religious and mythological subjects were considered of greater importance. Actually he accomplished some splendid work in these fields but his sober, essentially factual temperament did not lean to imaginative flights. It is as a portraitist that he is remembered, a portraitist in the widest sense "turning," as Señor Gasset so well says, tall painting into portraiture—that is to say, individualizing the object and rendering the scene as a singular momentary event."

S. P.

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# Current Attractions

## SYMPHONY

**T**HE annual season of the Philharmonic Orchestra "Ciudad de Mexico," which will comprise a series of seven Sunday morning concerts at the Metropolitan Theatre, is to begin on January 31. Five of the season's programs will be conducted by the eminent symphony leader Erich Kleiber, and the other two by the young though widely recognized Swiss leader Antoine de Bavier.

The opening program, to be performed under the baton of Bavier, is to consist entirely of Mozart composition, and will present as soloist the distinguished Mexican pianist Angelica Morales in the above composer's Concerto in D major for a piano and orchestra.

While as yet the season's total program has not been outlined, it has been announced that, in the manner of the opening program, each of the following ones will consist entirely of compositions by one given composer.

Although it lacks a permanent local conductor, the "Ciudad de Mexico" ensemble has been solidifying its prestige from year to year, and it can be safely predicted that its present season, mainly through the presence of Erich Kleiber, will serve to further enhance this prestige. In returning to Mexico after an interim of nine years, Kleiber will, so to speak, resume the direction of an orchestra which came into being largely as result of his brilliant initiative. Kleiber's achievement in 1945, in forming—one might even say of improvising—a thoroughly satisfactory ensemble from a heterogeneity of largely inexperienced talent,

By Vane C. Dalton

and in presenting with it a series of unforgettable Beethoven programs at the Bellas Artes, was indeed extraordinary.

It was this independent orchestra that through subsequent years, and under its present name, has distinguished itself under the batons of Sergiu Celibidache and other illustrious guest conductors.

## CONCERTS

**T**HE National Institute of Fine Arts is announcing its forthcoming season of ten concerts, to be given in the Sala Manuel M. Ponce of the Palacio de Bellas Artes on each consecutive Monday evening, beginning on the 15th. of this month and concluding on April 15.

The following soloists will appear during the series: Betty Fabila, Thelma Ferrigno and Rosa Rimich, singers; Stella Contreras, Maria Teresa Dauplat, Sulamita Koeningsberg, Raquel Mintz, and Armando Montiel Olvera, pianists; Dante Barzano, cellist; Rubén Islas, flutist, Hermilo Novelo and Icilio Bredo, violinists.

## BALLET

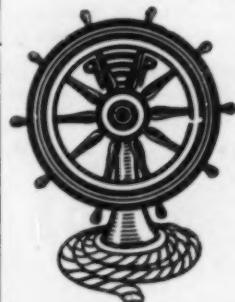
**A**LBEIT in the other fields of entertainment the foregone year has been on the whole somewhat dull, considerable progress has been made in the realm of the modern dance. Representing a sustained evolution of at least two decades, which in more recent years has been notably accelerated by the influence of José Limón, who performed and taught in our

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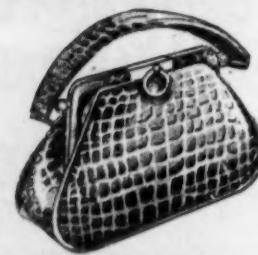
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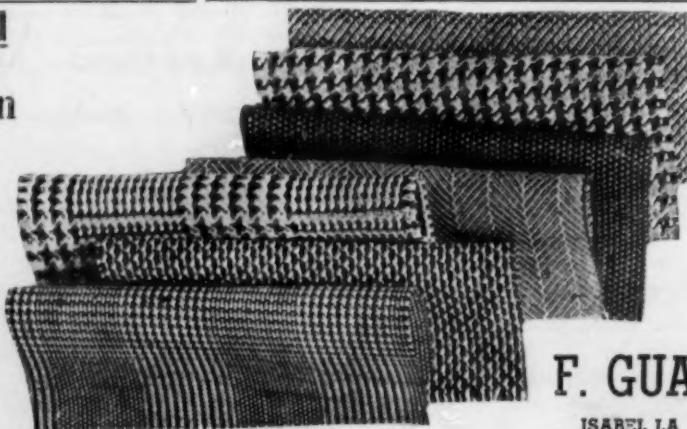
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midst, this form of art is steadily gaining in quality and in the scope of public acceptance. Mexico, in fact, has several well conducted schools, each with its acting group, as well as its own choreographers and composers.

Angel Salas, who combines the talents of composer and organizer, as the new director of the Dance Department at the National Institute of Fine Arts, amply revealed his unusual abilities during last November in the staging of the Seventh annual season by the Fine Arts Ballet company.

We sincerely applauded the ballet "Zapata"—a truly outstanding work with music by José Pablo Moncayo, choreography by Guillermo Arriaga and stage set by Luis Covarrubias. This was in all respects the finest work presented during the season. Of the ten new ballets brought out by this season, "El Extraño," with music by Angel Salas, was also highly impressive. Ana Mérida scored her most brilliant performance in "Psique," despite the marked shortcomings of the composition.

Of the older works included in the programs, we found particularly pleasing "La Valse," with its dramatic choreography by Raquel Gutierrez, as well as "La Manda" and "La Hija del Yori," with choreography by Rosa Reyna.

The season offered earlier in the year by the Ballet Moderno company at the Sala Chopin defined another quite worthy achievement. The performance of Amalia Hernandez, who heads this company, was veritably excellent, and her competent guidance was clearly perceptible in the dancing of Roseyra Marenco, Alma Rosa Martinez, Edmée de Moya and Colombia Moya, who formed her group.

With the Department of the Dance of the National Institute of Fine Arts now fully reorganized and normally functioning under its new administration, we may reasonably expect that the current year will be even more abundant and rewarding than the past.

\* \* \*

To begin with, the Ballet de la Universidad company, headed by Magda Montoya, will present this



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month a brief season, consisting of three programs, at the Palacio de Bellas Artes. The following works comprise the opening program: "Doce Contradanzas," with music by Beethoven; "El Judas Florido," inspired by a painting of Reyes Meza and with music by Alejandro Luna; "La Estrella y la Sirena," with music by Herrera de la Fuente, costumes and stage set by Elvira Gascón and story by José Durand; Pergolesi's Number Three Concerto, and "El Ruego" and "Murales," based on five mural paintings by José Clemente Orozco, with music by Alejandro Luna and costumes by Villalpando.

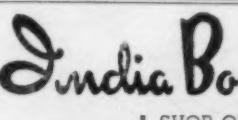
The second program consists of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto; Vivaldi's Classic Suite, "Las Ventanas, with music by Carlos Jimenez Mabarak, costumes and stage set by Villalpando, and story by Ruben Bonifaz; "Cuatro Imagenes," with music by Debussy, and "El Nahual Herido," with music by Mabarak and costumes and stage set by Reyes Meza.

The third program comprises: "Salutacion," with music by Ruth Schoental; "Cain y Abel," with music by the same author and costumes and stage set by Reyes Meza; "Las Cabezas Trocadas," with music by Ruth Schoental and costumes and stage set by Antonio Lopez Mancera; "La Corona de Espinas," with music by Bach and story by Bonitaz Nuño, and "Quintette," with music by Haendel.

All the choreography throughout the three programs is by the gifted and versatile Magda Montoya. José Pablo Moncayo and Salvador Ochoa will alternate as orchestra conductors. The Ballet de la Universidad company includes the following leading dancers: Magda Montoya, Ana Mérida, Rosa Reina, Beatriz Navarro, Lila López, Argentina Morales, Ricardo Silva, Miguel Araiza, José Silva, Lucero Binnquist, José Antonio Aviles, Telesforo Aeosta and David Ríos.



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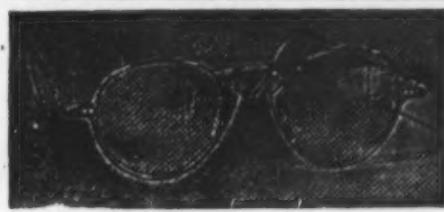
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**Art Events**

**T** WENTY and some odd canvases by Rufino Tamayo comprise the current show at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla No. 154). Tamayo, who was recently awarded the first premium at the Second Biennial Art Exposition held at Sao Paulo, Brazil, is widely recognized abroad as one of Mexico's most important contemporary painters. In Mexico, however, his non-objective expression, opposing as it does the realism of the more conventional native school, has been commonly regarded as the product of modern cosmopolitan rather than native influence.

Whichever the case, this artist's present exhibition defines a kind of belated local official and public approval. Today, in the opinion of our leading critics, Tamayo stands out as a thoroughly Mexican painter, whose abstract idiom is derived from indigenous pre-Conquest sources.

**A** GROUP exhibit of newer paintings by Guerrero Galván, Castro Pacheco, Reyes Meza, Dosamantes, Montoya and Urueta is being presented at this time by the Galeria Arte Moderno (Calle de Roma No. 21).

**T** HE Salon de la Estampa (Calle de Lisboa No. 48) is offering an unusually interesting exhibition of prints in color by noted contemporary Japanese artists.

**A** VOLUMINOUS and highly varied collective exhibit of works by newer local painters may be seen at this time in the new quarters of the Circulo de Bellas Artes (Calle de Niza No. 43).

**G**ALERIA ROMANO (José María Marroqui No. 5) is showing during this month a collection of paintings, which includes portraits, landscapes, still life, and compositions for mural decoration, by the young local artist Jesús Gutierrez.



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**A**RTURO PANI has inaugurated his new studios for interior decoration (Calle de Niza No. 23) with an extensive exhibition of paintings and prints by such distinguished European and Mexican artists as Anguiano, Bonnard, Braque, Buffet, Campigli, Cavarubias, Chagall, Derain, Dufy, Kandinsky, Kokoshka, Leger, Matisse, Merida, Meza, Picasso, Tamayo, and Villon.

**P**AINTINGS in oil by ten 19th century Mexican masters—Clausell, Clavé, Gedovius, Herrera, Izaguirre, Monroy, Parra, Pina, Rebull and Ruelas—are being exhibited during this month at Avenida Chapultepec No. 438.

**T**HE Institute of Italian Culture (Calle de Varsovia No. 22) is showing a group of sketches, in pencil or water color done by the Mexican artist Raúl Anguiano during his recent voyage to Italy.

**S**ALA VELAZQUEZ (Avenida Independencia No. 68) is offering as a kind of clearance sales exhibit a highly diverse collection of paintings and drawings by a number of outstanding local and foreign artists.

**A** QUITE impressive collection of serigraph prints by the American artist Richard Kent is being shown at present at the new exhibit gallery "23 Escalones" (Calle de Justo Sierra No. 61).

**T**HE Galeria de Arte Mexicano (Calle de Milán No. 18) is presenting at this time a most unusual collection of prints by modern French masters. The collection includes works by Renoir, Matisse, Rouault, Utrillo, Bonnard, Vuillar, Miro, Leger and Picasso.

**P**RINTS by Lola Cueto, Alice Trumbull Mason, Louis Hechenbleikner, Stanley Twardowicz, Fred Becker, Golub, John Wilson, José Luis Cuevas, Gonzalo de la Paz Perez, Thea Ramsey, Ricardo Reagan and Enrique Climent are on show at the Galeria San Angel (Dr. Galvez 23, Villa Obregón).

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## Patterns of an Old City

Continued from page 16

yant feeling he had known in so many other alien cities—in New York, London, Paris or Rome—the feeling of prowess and self-sufficiency, of power and confidence, of mastery over his surroundings.

This feeling, however, was not bred on reality. It was an outgrowth, a remainder, of a lifelong habit. It defined a perversely enduring optimism. For in the back of his mind there was the indubitable knowledge—a knowledge he staunchly suppressed, egotistically rejected—that the days when he could strut and gambol about the face of the world were definitely over, that the world he thought he owned had turned its back on him, had gone away from him and left him stranded. He knew that his kind of art had gone out of vogue years ago and that his name and fame were no longer of tangible value. And yet he was convinced that the new kind of art was a mere aberration, a symptom of a collective madness, and that he was right while everyone was wrong.

These, however, were the kind of thoughts that led to a sense of defeat and frustration, and he knew how to defend himself against them by dwelling only on the present, on the immediate prospects and unavoidable problems. Thus, as he sat at his easel, his practiced hands performing almost automatically, his mind was centered on his task and on what it might eventually imply. She would appear now, almost any moment, and they would have another pleasant séance, and meanwhile he could go on touching up what had been done, rounding out, smoothing out spots



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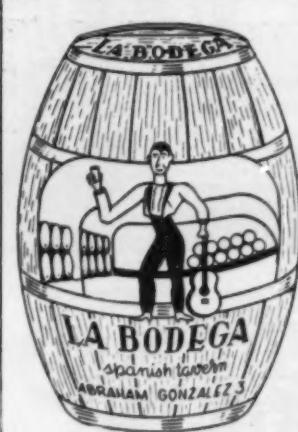


here and there, softening or hardening a line or tone where he felt it was required, modeling the features in such way that the coarser and heavier Aztec strain became submerged in a rictitious Asturian refinement,

And though specifically this was a new experience, he had pursued a similar general aim in all the portraits of women he had painted in the past. That, he was aware, was not only along the lines of sensible commercial practice; it was also along the way to female hearts. For somehow, whether it actually involved such consequence or not, nearly every portrait of a woman he painted represented a kind of seduction. That is to say, in creating their sublimated depictions he experienced an illusory sense of conquest and possession. Emotionally, these women became his own. And it also happened occasionally, providing, of course, he so desired, that during the process of creation, during the period of search and probing and of tacit surrender, an intimacy developed between himself and his models which made a final actual conquest possible.

Thus, while he painted men for money, he often painted women for love. And thus his art provided twofold fulfillment. He was the superb creator of illusion, the maker of an entrancing world peopled with heroic men and lovely and desirable women, a world of illusion as well as of reality, for it provided an endlessly exciting hunting ground. Indeed, Horace Basset's aesthetic élan was largely kindled by eroticism. He had had many women in many places, and usually when he was done with them, as with his portraits, he was completely done.

And yet, congenitally incapable as he was of yielding to an overwhelming passion, of falling completely in love with anyone, he made a few grievous slips in his life. There were at least three women who had exacted from him the price of what might have been permanent possession. These women he had married and divorced and the various children he had sired had been unfortunate blunders, temporary impediments, experiences which all belonged to a half-forgotten past. They were something he had acquired through weakness or fallacy and kept a while and finally lost or threw away; they were merely things—like the urgent appendectomy he underwent in London, or the



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suitcase that was stolen from his hotel room in Palermo—things that happened to him without profoundly affecting his inner existence or his course of life.

Even now when he was past sixty, Horace Bassett was not given to retrospective musing, and he was yet too much immersed in the present to worry about the future. And although his present was mostly an ordeal of repeated disappointment, a deplorable struggle to merely hang on, he was undaunted by hardship, undismayed by failure, much as in better times he had been unaffected by ease or success. Tall, erect, his long ruddy face crowned with a bushy mop of iron-grey hair, he yet preserved a disarming smile and a spark of whimsical interrogation in his eyes.

\* \* \*

He came to Mexico because in some vague fashion he had come to hopefully associate this country with art, and because he had pretty much exhausted his possibilities in Los Angeles. It was a place where a man had to keep up a front, pay a stiff rent for a studio, mingle with the right kind of people, spend a lot of money to earn some, while commissions for portraits, even among the movie stars and moguls, somehow became disastrously scarce. Those who bought paintings at all preferred the crazy modern kind. A man simply could not go on explaining to a lot of dolts, a lot of obtuse parvenu yokels, that his name was Horace Bassett. He left behind several months of unpaid rent, and brought with him the clothes he wore on his back, a paint box and a portable easel, a small battered bag and a billfold with very little cash and a collection of pawnshop tickets.

It was through the propitious recommendation of a young Mexican he knew in Los Angeles, Vicente Ibarra, who for a time had been a pupil of his (in order to increase his meager earnings and to have something to do Bassett even tried his hand at teaching), he found his way to Doña María Luisa's house. Vicente was her nephew, and though he made his living working in a garage, like so many young Mexicans he had a notion of some day becoming an artist. He told him that his aunt, having spare room in her house, took in an occasional boarder. It was not, he explained,

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because she needed the money but was due to the fact that since her only daughter got married she felt rather lonely being by herself in the house. She preferred, moreover, to rent her rooms to Americans.

Upon his arrival in the city, after a rather strenuous journey by bus, Bassett went straight to Doña María Luisa's house, and delivering her nephew's note was received with extreme cordiality. She was slightly puzzled over his scanty baggage, but she knew that Americans are at times inclined to be somewhat peculiar and even the rich ones might be indifferent to their appearance. Besides, she could readily see that whether rich or poor, he was a man of distinction, an artist and a gentleman. She assigned to him her best and largest room, with ample light and sufficient space to accommodate his easel, and from the first moment made him feel that he was something of a very special guest and not an ordinary boarder. Bassett, of course, had no idea as to what Mexico might eventually hold in store for him, but he was sure that in finding his lodgings in the house of Doña María Luisa he made a splendid beginning.

\* \* \*

He was now so deeply immersed in his work that he was startled by the gentle rapping on the door. Yes, he thought. Why yes, and rising from his chair said, "Come in, come in."

He felt a bit awkward, as if he had been overtaken at some unseemly act, as he put aside his palette and brushes, wiped his hands on a rag and guided her to her seat. Then, as he stooped down to make sure that the feet of the chair rested precisely over the chalk-marks he had made on the floor, and touching her lightly arranged the folds of her wine-colored taffeta dress, an odd feeling, a throb of an old excitement, flashed through him and made him feel a little giddy and limp.

He beheld her squat and almost waistless body, the bovine complacency in her eyes, her large and pudgy face rising neckless from her fleshy shoulders, and he knew that this feeling was utterly absurd, wholly preposterous, and yet it persisted. He went on fum-

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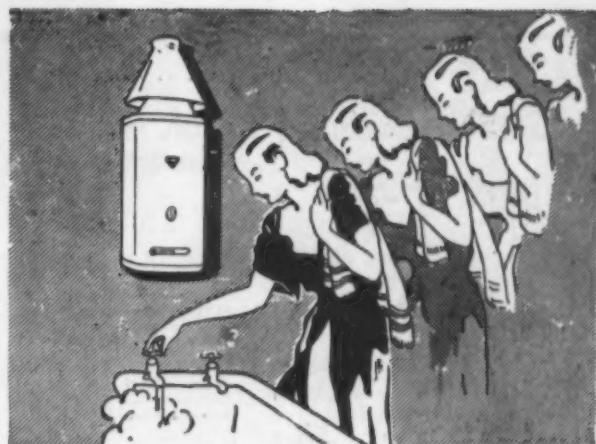
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bling with the folds of her dress, then gently grasped her in his arms and forced her to her feet.

Gasping, dodging his assailing mouth, she turned her head from side to side smearing his cheeks with lip-rouge; but when finally his lips caught up with hers, meekly she let them rest where they were. And even as he thus held her clasped in his arms, the thought that the thing was absurd was in his mind; but there was also the assuring feeling, the exhilarating knowledge that the game was not entirely finished, that Horace Bassett was yet getting on.

### Un Poco de Todo

Continued from page 33

and coronary disease, the courses of both of which are influenced by fats that have not been dealt with normally by the body.

Hitherto regarded chiefly as a preventive of scurvy, vitamin C turned out to regulate the rate at which cholesterol is formed, cholesterol being a fat-like, waxy substance that is deposited on the walls of arteries so that they harden and narrow. A team of Columbia University scientists under the direction of Dr. Charles Gleen King made the discovery.

A place in the brain that controls appetite was discovered in the hypothalamus by Dr. C. N. H. Long (Yale). It would appear that there are in the hypothalamus two areas, in close proximity to each other, which exert opposite effects on food intake. Damage of one part of this appetite center may arouse such an appetite that an animal will eat twice or three times the normal amount of food. Result: obesity. Damage slightly to the side of this voracious appetite spot destroys the appetite and the animal will not touch food. Result: death.

Typhoid fever vaccine is a safe preparation to use in encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), Dr. Evelynne G. Knouf and Dr. Albert G. Bower of Pasadena, Calif., reported. The two researchers had been impressed by the fact that encephalitis never follows typhoid.

### Don Fidencio

Continued from page 26

for the love of God, lend me fifty pesos!" or it may be seventy or even a hundred. He does it usually when his taxes are due. Yes, he, a rich and educated man, grovels on the floor and weeps in front of his peons. And then, you see, they speak about it, and

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the word goes round that Don Fidencio is not really rich at all, but quite poor, a man who must come to me, poor as I am, and borrow fifty pesos for his taxes. And the bandits have never been near him again."

The light was fading and the lake had turned silver with big smudges of smoke gray. Chui and the sharecropper had finished winnowing that lot of corn. They had put it into the big basket, and they had folded up the straw mat. Old Encarnación, Nieves' grandmother, who is very poor and a persistent beggar, was beginning to pick over the chaff in search of a few grains of corn. Don Fidencio and his daughter walked slowly back from the jetty. The daughter went very slowly. She would reach the narrow street to the village just as Chui, carrying the two small baskets and the mat, reached it too. The sharecropper staggered under the big basket full of grain. In a garden up the street two guitars began to thrum below two high, strained voices.

"Of course," said Venustiano, "if that Chui marries his daughter, Don Fidencio and I will be relations."

"And do you always lend him money?" I asked.  
"Oh, yes."

"But then don't the bandits get the idea that you are the rich man? Don't they ever trouble you?"

"Me?" said Venustiano, his whole face wrinkled with surprise.

He got up and flung his nut-brown sarape over his shoulder.

"No, they don't bother me. You see, the chief of the bandits and I are compadres. We are very closely related. No, they don't trouble me, pues."

### Planning a National Economy

Continued from page 24

Fifth, the purpose and worth of the industrialization program should be brought back closely into perspective and harnessed to the team of basic public works, and agricultural development for a long, steady pull. Industrialization is no economic cure-all, as official Mexico is too inclined to view it, and a sound industrial structure cannot be built more ra-

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pidly than the base of public works and agriculture can be broadened and strengthened. It is the conviction of this observer that Mexico's industrialization program should be slowed sufficiently to allow all other elements of the economy to catch up, and to permit diversion of enough effort and resources to accelerate agricultural improvement, currently the heaviest drag on general economic development.

Sixth, the entire system of distribution in Mexico demands a complete overhauling; it is not only inefficient but actually archaic in some phases. As a result, the price structure is incongruous in many aspects, and the traditional functions of a free market operate haphazardly where they operate at all. A national market both for manufactured and agricultural products must be built in the years ahead.

Seventh, the Mexican government should overhaul itself, a task something in the nature of that undertaken by the Hoover Commission for governmental reorganization in the United States. None of the foregoing can be done efficiently, some of it not at all, unless the red-taped maze of Mexican bureaucracy can be converted and simplified into a reasonably workable administrative system.

Undoubtedly the formation of a genuine master plan for national economic development would encounter problems in addition to those mentioned in the main points noted above, but it could not in common sense ignore the questions raised here. Perhaps nothing but the irresistible pressure of expediency could force any Mexican government into such a neo-revolutionary undertaking. Popular resentment, however, over recurring economic fluctuations and dislocations, income and wealth maladjustments, and developmental setbacks may provide that pressure on any administration failing to overcome the continuous crises afflicting the Mexican government's economic program.

#### The Perfect Servant

Continued from page 22

man looked anything but pleased. He gave Mr. Shafer a curt glance and, in broken English, asked for Jason. When he was told that Jason wasn't on the premises, he explained that he was Capitán Solano and had come personally to warn Jason that unless he left the village by morning he would never leave, for Lieutenant Valdes was prepared to shoot him on sight. It seemed that the Lieutenant's wife's younger sister had been the latest object of Jason's advances, and, according to the Capitán, Lieutenant Valdes was a very hot-headed young man and a good shot in the bargain. Having delivered this portentous message, the Capitán bowed stiffly and withdrew.

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When Jason appeared a few hours later, somewhat glazed by tequila highballs, he found his bag packed and Mr. Shaeffer, fully dressed and waiting in the studio. Mr. Shaeffer told Jason about the Capitán's visit, and five minutes later they were enroute to Mexico City in Mr. Shaeffer's car. That same morning Mr. Shaeffer saw to it that Jason boarded the train bound for Los Angeles. When he arrived home that evening, Mrs. Shaeffer was greatly upset.

"I've had a most enlightening morning," she sighed.

"Really, darling," replied Mr. Shaeffer.

"Yes, one of our neighbors, an American, called and told me that Jason has been posing as a Hollywood producer, George Raft's double, and God knows what else. Anyway, he used all of the seedy Hollywood seduction tricks and was apparently very successful among the señoritas. He also made the big mistake of seducing the landlord's daughter, who is very chummy with the daughter of our cook. Apparently they exchanged confidences."

"And, of course," added Mr. Shaeffer, "Jason in his role of Caliph would never imagine that the landlord's daughter and the cook's daughter could possibly exchange confidences—not to mention the Lieutenant's wife and her sister."

"All the same, I'll always be very fond of Jason."

"Yes, and so shall I—you know, darling, I think in my future writing I'll forget social problems and try something along sex or humor."

"I think that would be less difficult, darling. And besides we could use the money."

#### A Sonora Ghost Town

Continued from page 18

they came at night and played for money a game they called poker. The object of this game, it seems, was to wager that you had higher cards than your fellows, even if you had not. The Americans played this game, and gambled on it as recklessly as the Mexican miners bet on a cock fight, but, being well paid engineers and foremen, they had a great deal more to spend. From each winning, the player was bound to put a percentage into a fund for a burial ground, to be used by the members when death came to any of the lot.

"This game that they played must have been for high stakes, for soon the club bought a good piece of ground on a hillside, and had a large stone fence

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and a fine iron gate built to close it in. We Mexicans thought this very strange. With us, it is something solemn to prepare for death; but to these peculiar men, it all seemed to be a very big joke, to be laughed at and talked about in the lightest manner. On Sunday mornings, it was not uncommon to see most of those who were sober enough to walk gathered in their empty burial grounds, admiring the flowers and looking at how the trees grew. They had hired a fine gardener and had planted trees and flowers that were the envy of the neighborhood. Sometimes, they would even carry some member of their club, too boracho to travel on his own feet, and show him the spot where they would bury him if he drank too much. This never seemed to change the drinking habits of those who were carried on the trips of inspection. The Mexican people of La Colorada believed that they must all be loco in the head.

"The trees grew, and so did the burial fund. Rumors around town had it that each member had as much as five hundred pesos to be spent on his funeral. We all looked forward to the first death. A funeral such as this would be a real event.

"Then, one day, the vein of rich gold ore pinched out as suddenly as it had opened up. In a few months the ore that had been uncovered in the various parts of the mine was all put through the mill. The tunnels and shafts that they dug to find more ore were all unsuccessful. We felt that this was the ill luck that everyone had predicted, to follow such a hilarious attitude toward so serious a thing as death; and people began moving away.

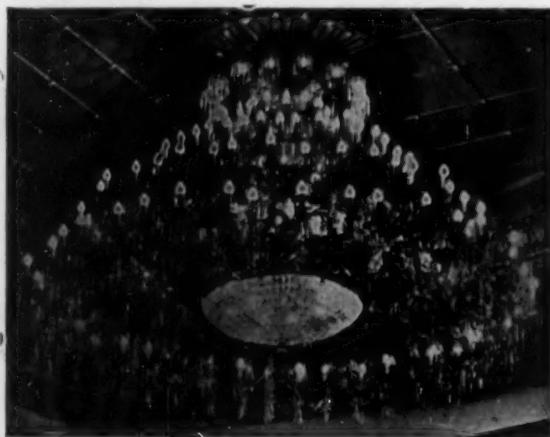
"Those who moved away first were the unlucky ones; for the 'club' called a meeting to decide on the spending of the money they had saved for funerals, and voted to spent the whole sum on a great fiesta as a sort farewell to the town, before they left. There were wagonloads of beer taken from the little train, and all of the other things that it takes to make a grand fiesta. Word went out on the brush telegraph, and the whole town was full—to help these strange men celebrate what they called the 'funeral of La Colorada.' It was a great time, and it took over a week to spend all the money. No one was seriously hurt in

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any of the fights. The Americans at last moved away without burying any of their party in the so beautiful Campo Santo. Now, there are only a handful of us left in the town—mostly hunting pieces of ore, overlooked by the miners in the rush days, and grinding it out with arrastras and burro power.

"La Colorada is 'muy triste,' my friends, and the sadness does not all come from the fact that the great gold mine is closed. The place is being haunted by more and more ghosts, every year. On Saturday nights people who are unlucky enough to pass the room where they had their games can hear the clink of money and glasses. No one goes near the graveyard at night, for it is said that the spirits of club members who have died return, each night, to the place where they had hoped to be buried. They are a so very strange lot of men! Crazy and unpredictable, even in death."

### Braceros farm for Mexico

Continued from page 14

run them—electric power is still a few years away. The over-all cost is not excessive, and the first year's cotton crop has frequently paid for the initial cost of the land, clearing, leveling, the well and pump, and all planting and harvesting costs.

A "water witcher" never misses here. Anyone looking at the broad alluvial plains with high mountains far away to the east, and knowing of the traversing rivers such as the Sonora, the Yaqui, the Mayo, the Fuerte, knows that underground water is available. One well in the vicinity of Culiacán in Sinaloa produced around four thousand gallons per minute—a lot of water for any farm. With the exception of rice; the crops generally grown will not need more than four acre feet of water per acre to maintain maximum production. One well developing a thousand gallons per minute will irrigate more than a hundred acres of cotton. The new farming lands extending from Hermosillo south through Empalme, Obregón, and Navojoa have been a mecca for well drillers, U.S. and Mexican. In many cases the farmers are thoroughly familiar with the use of underground water for irrigation from experience working around Casa Grande in Arizona or in the vicinity of Salinas, California.



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The story of Pablo Ramos, as he told it to me in Obregón, is inspiring. He is now a prosperous farmer with about 360 acres of good farm land south of that city, with canal water available. As a contract worker, Pablo spent a few years in California, where he learned the best methods of diversified farming. Intelligent and thrifty, he returned to his home near Obregón with a lot of experience and a considerable sum saved up. With government aid he bought this undeveloped land, which was covered with mesquite, for five hundred pesos per hectare—about twenty-four dollars per acre. He pays 7 per cent interest on the money he owes. Clearing and leveling the land cost him an additional twelve dollars an acre. In the few years since he has had the land in crops, he has made a fortune. Pablo regularly grows wheat and rice, two of the most profitable staples in the vicinity. At times his rice will yield forty hundredweight per acre and his wheat as high as twenty-five hundred-weight per acre, although his average yields are less.

Pablo's tools include no walking plows. He owns an Oliver wheel tractor that cost him about 4,400 dollars and a good Canadian-made thresher worth about 6,000 dollars. In addition, he has a large Oliver disc plow, a Chevrolet pickup truck, and an assortment of other farm implements. The one he prizes most is his land plane, which he uses every year to level his land for the crops that demand precise grading for proper distribution of water to all the plants. Pablo is thoroughly familiar with farm machinery. He knows his credit limitations, the markets, the value of fertilizers, and the need for pest control work. Pablo knows where he is going, and Mexico is proud of him and thousands like him.

In the last few years cotton farmers have made fabulous profits, and the price of farm lands has shot up far above what it was three or four years ago. The cotton boom in the United States has spread south of the border. Newly cleared lands have been planted to this crop, and numerous new cotton gins have been built. Representatives of the large U.S. brokerage houses are found in the principal west coast cities along with their Mexican colleagues. One cotton farmer stated that cotton was raised in Mexico in 1951 for only eight cents a pound! This crop naturally has a strong appeal, even though it is not subsidized in Mexico, and that country's production is of course an important factor in the international markets.

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It was interesting to see the cotton fields in Mexico in the middle of last December. They were picked clean. At the same time across the border in Arizona and California, the fields were still white. Few cotton-picking machines are seen on the west coast of Mexico, for labor is still plentiful. One farmer, complaining of what he considered a labor shortage, said: "I was able to get my field picked only seven times."

Around Navojoa there was always a strong tourist demand for the beautiful hand-woven blankets made by the Mayo Indians. This year a search in the stores and shops revealed none for sale. As one merchant explained: "The Mayo Indians have been so busy picking cotton and doing other farm work that they don't have time to weave these blankets any more." While the prevailing farm wage for the last year or so has been eight pesos a day, farmers and merchants agree that this low rate cannot continue for long.

It still is not unusual in parts of Mexico to see a farmer walking behind a plow powered by a couple of huge, docile oxen, preparing his field for the inevitable corn crop. This becomes more noticeable as you travel from Mazatlán toward the southeast through the states of Nayarit, Jalisco, and Michoacán toward the capital. Usually the farmer is working a small field—up to twenty acres—frequently set aside from his neighbor's by a sturdy rock fence. Much of this corn land is in hilly districts and depends on the summer rains. Obviously, it is not possible to farm these small plots more economically with tractors. The cost and upkeep make that entirely impractical.

But another story unfolds in the lands benefiting from the irrigation projects or where pumped water is available. It is not practical to grow such crops as cotton, rice, wheat, and flax on a small farm. The farmer cannot use the walking plow and oxen. Without machinery he cannot level the land properly for irrigation. To support a large outlay of money for modern implements, the farm must be big enough to cover all costs through its production. Pablo Ramos, on his 360-acre farm, had a capital outlay for his tractor, thresher, and other implements of more than fifteen thousand dollars. He could probably reduce this investment considerably by eliminating his thresher and having its work done by threshing contractors. But the minimum investment to operate his property efficiently would be close to ten thousand dollars. So in remote areas the farmer with oxen will probably continue to farm his terraces and hillsides in the old way. But the man with the walking plow will never

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successfully invade the land served by the large irrigation projects.

The new type of agriculture calls for other changes. To maintain high production, proper fertilizing and pest-control practices are all-important. In the past few years the principal U.S. chemical and fertilizer companies have established agencies in the chief agricultural centers along the west coast of Mexico, and the government is encouraging local fertilizer production. Airplane service is now readily available for dusting and spraying. Tractor-propelled spraying and dusting machines are also on the job, usually operated by Mexicans who have done the same work in the United States.

Sturdy U.S. farm trucks are seen everywhere on highways and side roads taking farm products, machinery, insecticides, and commercial fertilizers from one place to another. The big U.S. transport carriers are not yet in evidence, but they too will make their appearance just as soon as the highways are completed and long hauls become practicable. Transportation received another big push forward, in the opinion of west-coast residents, when the railroad that serves this area was purchased by the Mexican Government from the Southern Pacific, in December 1951. Roadbeds will be rebuilt and new rolling stock will be bought.

For enterprising young men from the United States who can speak Spanish and who have a technical knowledge of machinery, pest control, fertilization, or other specialties of modern agriculture, there are many opportunities in the Mexican west-coast region. They must be sturdy young men, for these farms are in the hot lands.

A farm-implement dealer in Sonora summed up the area's confident enthusiasm. I had told him that I felt the strength and stability of the United States as a nation was largely due to its vast agricultural resources. He agreed, and maintained that Mexico could enjoy similar advantages. "The government po-



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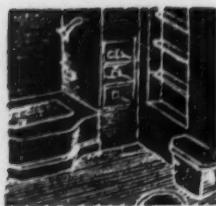
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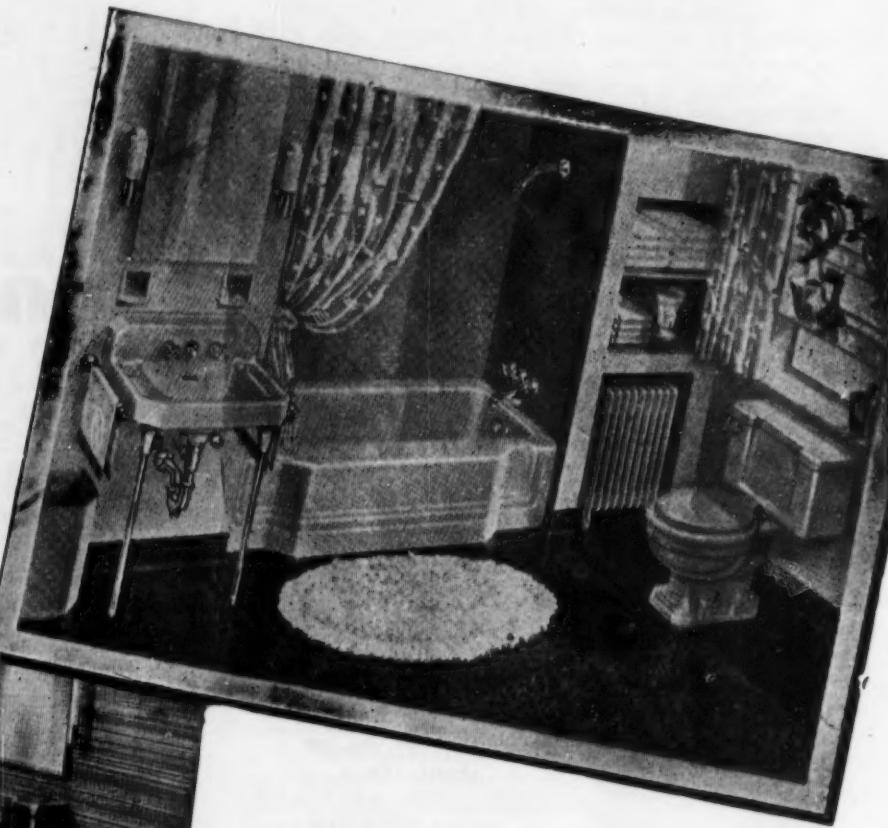
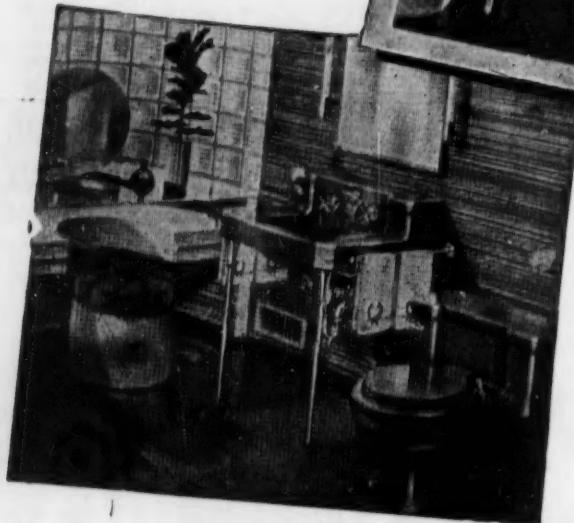
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lacy of the last few years, with its accent on agricultural development, is now showing results. Our government has virtually eliminated illiteracy among the young, and it is building new highways and irrigation dams throughout the country. We too are on the way to being a great agricultural nation."

It's a long haul, for most of Mexico's farmers still scrape by on a very low standard of living, working with antiquated methods and tools and little regard for the conservation of their land. As the working party set up by the Mexican Government and the International Bank points out in its report, "The Economic Development of Mexico," the deleterious effects of erosion and deforestation will be felt more strongly as adding land by irrigation grows more costly. And if foreign markets cannot continue to absorb an increasing share of Mexico's farm output at the high prices of the last few years, bigger production for domestic consumption would offer a better course for agricultural expansion.

But Mexico's farmers are not forgotten men, and, thanks in large part to experience gained in the United States, more and more of them are putting the latest tools and techniques to work on the job at hand.

#### **Señor, it is a Pump**

Continued from page 12

who has the water-selling concession from Guadalajara, was pulling at his long chin and smiling, but it was not a good smile to see.

"Well, amigo," he said, "let us see the contraption work."

This is the job of a boy or a woman, so my father gave me permission and I took the handle. Now I am not big and strong like Nacho but I did think I should have got some water out of the well in ten minutes. I did not.

The men were moving around embarrassed, all except Maximino Iturbe. He made jokes.

"What is your trouble, Chieo? Have you pumped your well dry already?"



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My father asked me to rest but I was stubborn. I disobeyed him. My hands were sore and the sweat was dark on the manta shirt my mother made for my birthday.

"My friend here calls pulling on a rope a lot of work," Maximino Iturbe said, poking his thumb at my father. "But this is, of course, the play of children. Do you have fun, Chico?"

"It is possible that there is a leaf caught in the strainer," my father said, wearing the look of a mechanic.

\* \* \*

I stopped pumping then. "No, my father," I said. "I think it needs priming."

I lowered the bucket into the well on the rope. I pulled up half a pail of water and poured some of it down the pipe in the manner of Nacho. I grabbed the handle with speed and immediately water came out the spout. I was happy for my father and I pumped until the pail was full.

"There," I said, doing like Nacho.

But Maximino Iturbe leaned back in his saddle and laughed hard.

"I have seen enough of this demonstration," he said. "Ho, ho, ho," he laughed. "So little Maria draws water out of the well in a bucket to pour it into a pipe so it comes out a spout so that she does not have to draw it out of the well in a bucket," I thought he should dismount from his horse to laugh so much. He did not even stop when my father spoke.

"Observe, amigos," he said. "Observe that the boy received from the pipe more water than he poured in."

But Maximino Iturbe continued to laugh and the other men, because Señor Iturbe is rich, laughed too.

"Laugh, then," my father said, "but this is the way the fishing boats empty their water in California. Wait! Where is Nacho?" he asked me.

I did not know.

"Well, ask at his house. I will look at the plaza."

We went around the corner of the street together and we both found Nacho at the same time.

He was holding Maria's hand through the window.

I flattened myself tight against the wall to watch and Nacho took his hand from Maria and put it in his pocket.

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My father said, "I will be brief. I denied you my house but permitted you to remain in the village. Now you must leave the village."

"I will marry Maria," Nacho said. "I do not wish to be disrespectful, Señor, but you have not the authority to deny me the village."

"I will consider this," my father said. He pushed back his sombrero and smoothed his forehead.

"I believe the law would support you in this," my father said. "Therefore, I will permit you to make the decision. The rain clouds, you see, are already gathering over the mountains, a week early this year. So my family are going over the mountain to my land tomorrow for the planting. We will be gone two weeks, at the will of the rain and the Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe. If you are gone when we return, very well. If not, I will board up the window of Maria and not permit her to leave the house until you leave." It was clear that my father meant this. "The choice is yours," he said. "Maria does not like always to be indoors."

He put his hand on my shoulder and we went back into the yard. All the men were gone.

"You have permission to kick the pump," my father said. But when I looked at him he winked and pushed my sombrero with his hand . . .

\* \* \*

The next day we loaded food and water on our burro and departed for our land. Rain clouds were like a heavy tablecloth over the mountain and we had two hectares to hoe and plant, but on our tierra, the sun was bright. My father talked little but swung his hoe steadily ahead of Mama with the seed.

On the third day my father and I walked three kilometres to the Guadalajara road. We were seeking the bus, Yo Sufro, which runs each week to Santa Guadalupe, and we found it right away. The engine had become inferno just at this point, an admirable fortuity since a vendor sold pulque from a little stand there. The priest from Santa Guadalu-

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pe was sitting in the bus and when he saw us he came out.

"Congratulations, Señor," he said. "That is a fine boy you have working at your house."

"Boy?" my father said. "This boy, Chico, is my son. I have sired no other."

"I do not make myself understood," the Father said. "I indicate young Nacho. He is an excellent brick mason. I did not know."

My father did not reply until he had removed his sombrero and scratched the mark of the band. Then he said with only peace in his voice, "And what is this fine mason building?"

"I do not know. He says the work was willed by the Divine Master, which as all agree, is more important than the whim of man."

"A church!" my father said. "On my property? Where does he get so much brick?"

The priest was commencing to enjoy himself. "He is using that pile in your yard. But I do not think it is a church. I have never seen such a structure."

"I must return to Santa Guadalupe," my father said. "This young fool, Nacho, is using all the bricks with which I intend to finish building the house of Maria."

"He is not a fool," Mama said.

\* \* \*

My father nodded his head. "No, Rosario, you are right and I talk with an angry tongue, but he is indeed most stubborn."

"Papa," Maria said, smiling and taking his hand, "Nacho likes you and wants to impress you."

"Likes me, chicken?" my father said. "He is then switching his affections. Until now he liked only

Chico." He spanked her on her backside and he said, "I will take the burro and return as soon as I have reprimanded this gaming cock."

Maria pointed her finger at the sky. "Rain, my father," she said. "Mama can plan and I can cover and Chico can hoe, but Chico cannot hoe very much. You will need three days for this trip and the burro, I think, is already tired."

Since Maria put it in this way the anger of my father vanished. "Truly," he said, "we must have corn and frijoles for the winter. But when the bus comes again I will send a message to the Presidente Municipal who will arrest him."

"No, Papa," Maria coaxed. "He will go to prison then."

"You talk of prison when he will necessitate that I imprison you in my own house?" my father said...

The corn was more than half planted when the day of the bus came. My father and I walked to the road early because he said the bus, though it is usually late, sometimes anticipates itself.

The bus was very late but it stopped when my father erected his hand. It is good fortune for some that the priest travels so much to Guadalajara because he was again on the bus.

He ejected himself from Yo Sufro in a manner not customary with priests and he gave my father an abrazo. He took the hand of my father and he said, "Señor, young Nacho is indeed divinely inspired. It is a well."

The shoulders of my father sagged from the work of the hoe. He did not have strength. "But how?" he asked.

The priest surrendered his clean black knee to the dust of the roadside and he described a picture with a cactus thorn.

"He built this brick wall," the Father said "until it was as high as his shoulder. Then he jumped inside the circle and began to dig out the sand with a shovel, throwing it over the wall. It was astonishing."

"You watched this?" my father asked.

"Oh, yes. Everybody in the village watched. When he had dug out the middle he dug carefully all around the edge, and as he would remove a shovel under the wall it would sink a little. In this fashion he dug round and round until the top of the wall was even with the ground."

"Astonishing, indeed," my father said. "And the sand could not roll in on him. But not a very deep well, for certain."

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"Ah, yes," but the priest continued. "He built another section of wall on top of that as high as his shoulder and dug some more. He did this four times so the sand had to be pulled out with a bucket and a long pole. It is a beautiful construction."

"With permission, Father," my father said, "I would like to know where he got the bricks to do all this."

The priest smiled. "A very ingenious boy, this Nacho. When he had finished the loose brick he took down the wall that served no purpose—"

"My wall!" my father cried, excited.

The hand of the priest said it was nothing. "He did it with a hatchet, did not break one brick. The mortar was poor and the brick badly laid. By the time the well was deeper than five meters the water was flowing in faster than Frederico and I could pull it out with a bucket! Such water! As clear as the Water Eye in Ajijic."

"You, Father! You pulled the rope?"

"Ah, yes. All the remaining men of the village except Maximino Iturbe helped. Why, when we ran out of brick again, Nacho directed the Presidente Municipal himself to remove the brick from your patio." He laughed loudly. "It was easy. It was not even cemented."

My father got up from his knees and the priest got up from his knees, and I brushed the dust from his black pants. The bus driver said with timidity, "Father, with permission, the bus would like to proceed."

\* \* \*

So the Father got in the bus and the bus moved away so rapidly nobody had time to tell anybody to walk with God. And then it happened. My father took off his sombrero and he said slowly. "Corn or no corn, I must stop this ravage. Witness, Chico. This is the first time in my life I have been moved to violence." He dropped his sombrero on the ground and he jumped on it.

Then he left it in the dust of the road and we walked quickly away. We were almost with Mama and Maria when he looked down at me and smiled. "It was not a good sombrero, anyway, Chico. For nine years now it has given me an illness in the forehead."

When Mama saw us she said, "Pero por de Dios, where is your sombrero?"

But my father did not answer. Without speaking he thrust food in the pack and placed it on the burro. "If you go now," Mama said, "we will have corn for only half a year."

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"I am necessitated to go," my father said then. "We need a house as well as food."

And even though Mama started to cry he tied his water olla also on the burro.

But Maria, who knows my father well, put her arms around Mama and she said, "Be brave, Mama. I have some of the great strength of my good father. Though my hands are small and soft I will work with the hoe. We will have food."

Then my father was ashamed, and he said, "Bless the saints for such a family. I should put my knees to earth for such blessings." And he approached Mama and put his arm on her shoulder and led her to the burro.

"You women go. We men will hoe and plant. Go and preserve my house."

Mama ceased to cry. "Nothing shall happen to the house. I promise it."

They started off walking beside the burro and they turned back to whisper, "Walk with God, Papa. Walk with God, Chico." Then Maria ran back and kissed my father on the cheek and tied her rebozo about his head. "I will share the rebozo of my mother," she said. My father looked very ridiculous but very happy wearing the rebozo of Maria.

\* \* \*

In three days the frijoles were planted and I was covering the last row of corn behind my father when a large drop of rain fell on the rebozo of Maria on the head of my father. We looked up and ascertained that the sky was black.

"It will rain, papa," I said.

"Indeed," he said. "I am glad your mother and your sister have a roof over their heads. He stopped

to feel where another drop hit his face and he said, "I hope they have a roof. One cannot predict such a boy as Nacho."

The rain came then and we gathered up our tools and the tortillas and oranges we had left. We sat under the shelter of a tree, which was no shelter because of no leaves, then my father elevated himself.

"For your sake, Chico, I wish the bus was due and I also wish I had two pesos for the fare, but I fear we must walk."

We walked all the night in the rain, resting only for some food, and in the morning we reached the top of the mountain that looks down over Santa Guadalupe. We could see nothing of the lake or of the village. The rain was a wall in front of us and the earth ran in mud down the mountainside. We could not even use the path of the last week because it was a river with waterfalls and rocks which rolled in the river.

"On the other side it was rain," my father said. "Here it is flood. Come, Chico, we must hurry."

It appeared that the broken trees and the rocks hurried more than we did but we came to Santa Guadalupe in the afternoon. Each street was a river and no one could stand in the streets.

Our house was above water and Mama ran to the door to meet us.

"Praise the saints," she cried. "You are saved!"

"And the house?" asked my father. "And Maria?"

"All well," Mama said. It was as if we had journeyed from the oceans.

"Where is Maria?"

"She went to the tienda hours ago to trade some eggs for candles," Mama said. "I conjecture that she is visiting some friends."

"In the rain?" my father asked.

"The candles will not melt," Mama said. "Now get out of your wet clothes."

But my father said, "I will not melt either. I want to see this construction in the yard."

Outside the rain was already lessening and the rivers which ran down the streets were less deep. We walked to the new well. It had a brick wall above ground as high as my belly and a platform of wood on the top. The pump was painted red and bolted to

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the platform. I pushed the handle of the pump a little and water leapt from the spout enough to fill half a bucket. My father even put his hand on the handle to try it and appeared satisfied when he too got water.

Then the priest came through the gate, hurrying more than a priest should.

"Oh, Señor," he said, "I am glad you are home. I must report a calamity. Your Maria and young Nacho came to me to be married just this past hour. I refused because I knew your sentiments about the boy, so they are now at the office of the Presidente Municipal for a matrimonio civil. It is terrible."

"Go, Father," my father said, "Please go and implore them to stop."

The good Father hastened himself to the gate but he was stopped by two people coming in. They were carrying ollas. The priest waited while they spoke to my father.

"Señor, yours is the only well in the village which has clean water. Look. They are coming from all over for clean water to cook."

The priest looked out and stepped back immediately. The rain was finished and the whole village was approaching my father's house with ollas on their shoulders.

"My well is broken," said one.

"My well is full of rocks and mud," said another.

My father erected his hand and spoke to those in front.

"Amigos," he said, "you have been abundantly generous with me at many ill-favored times in the past. My house is yours. My well is at your service. Pump as you wish, but I must leave you to prevent a tragedy to my house."

He tried to work his way through the gate but a man pushing from behind stopped him. It was Maximino Iturbe.

"How much do you charge, Señor?" he said, like a prayer. "I request that you remember all the generosities I have done for you in the past and not charge me more than the others. My hotel needs water. The road to Guadalajara is washed out."

My father looked at Maximino Iturbe. He began to smile.

"Maximino," he said, "your place is farther back in the line, I believe. When you get to the pump, take such water as you need. There is no charge. I think it is not the will of the Divine Master that water should be sold. Now, with your permission, I would pass. I must prevent a tragedy to my house."

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When I saw that my father and the priest were through the gate I hurried back through the house and I was at the Administration before them. But I waited so it would appear I came with their permission and I got it when the Presidente would have closed the door.

"All right, squirrel," he said and he patted me on my sombrero.

Nacho was standing up, and Maria stood up also. In the presence of the Presidente Municipal my father was respectful.

"May I speak?" he asked.

The Presidente smiled. "As it is probably the first time in my memory that you have not taken that privilege for granted, amigo, how can I deny you? Speak."

My father looked at Maria, and she smiled at my father. Then he looked at Nacho and I thought he was measuring him for a coffin until I saw Nacho smile. I looked at my father and he was smiling too. Then he spoke.

"This boy," he said, "has brought distinction to my house and wisdom to my middle years. He should be married, as it is fitting, in the house of his bride."

\* \* \*

They were married, but things are not much changed at our house. My father and Nacho are getting rich in the well-digging and pump business, but Nacho still finds time to sit and tell me about California. Maria still smiles at him from the kitchen, and my father in his new, beautiful sombrero still gives advice in the cantina in the evenings.

Yesterday he brought home a long piece of tin and he told all of us, especially Nacho, that it had a purpose and that no one should do anything with it.

I saw Nacho looking at it after supper and I looked at it too. If you bent it down the middle it would be just right for a roof gutter. I am beginning to understand the difference now between a boy who is clever with his hands and a man who is a genius.

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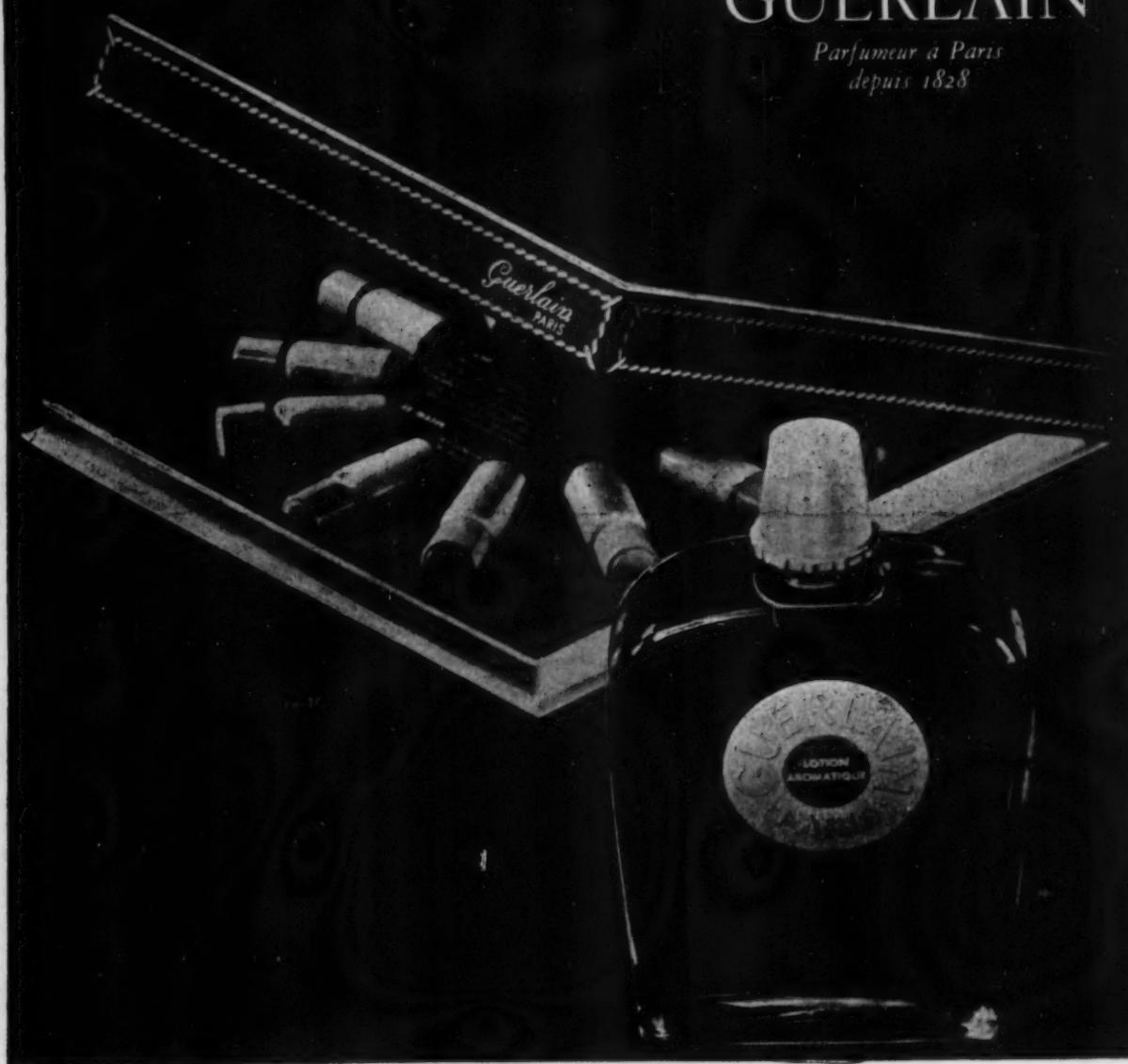
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